best of witzend



EDITED BY BILL PEARSON
& J. MICHAEL CATRON



best of

WITZEND

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BEST OF witzend

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INTRODUCTION

by Bill Pearson

I take great satisfaction in having known and worked with some of the greatest cartoonists and illustrators of the 20th century. I came into the mix of talented people who made *witzend* a unique publication through a fluke, but once Wallace Wood had turned it over to me, I tried my best to keep the title relevant.

In the beginning, it was *Mad* artist Wood — respected by his peers as one of the best cartoonists in the world — who urged others to recognize that there were artistic possibilities beyond low-paying servitude to omnipotent publishers. To prove it, he founded, "edited," and published *witzend*. But after four issues he bowed out, leaving me, a young apprentice with scant credits in the industry, in charge.

I'm proud of my stewardship of the title over the succeeding years, even as it became ever more difficult to secure enough quality content to fill each issue and maintain *witzend*'s reputation as a trendsetting publication. And set a trend it did — many potential contributors realized they could self-publish their own material! By the time of my last issue in 1985, others had surpassed me by every measure in developing the graphic story genre that has become a much-respected area of publishing today.

Every new idea is based on previous ideas, and determining which ideas came first is sometimes difficult. Sure, underground comix were sprouting up at about the same time; science fiction fanzines had been around for decades and are still being published today; EC Comics, especially *Mad*, had been a sensation in the 1950s; and Sunday color comic strips had burst on the public's consciousness soon after the turn of the 20th century.

Wood and I, along with many others in the comics industry, were surprised when Gil Kane (who wasn't a *witzend* contributor then or ever) devoted his keynote address at the 1967 Comic Art Convention to his conviction that *witzend* was the harbinger of the future!

Witzend was fairly basic, but it was a new concept, nonetheless. Producing graphic novels and shorter stories is *hard work*, and to spend one's time and talent in creating something without a firm assignment was a challenge to even the most successful writers and artists.

Witzend never paid for contributions. The deal was: the original art was returned to the creator after a single printing, along with all rights. Other professionals began negotiating with publishers such as DC and Marvel for a share of ownership and profits for new characters and concepts. Gradually, the industry changed, which was instigated substantially by Wally Wood's little magazine.

There were never more than a few thousand copies printed of any issue, but its influence carried well beyond the fellow professionals and fervid fan artists and writers who were inspired by the early issues. Despite not having to pay for material, with such a small subscribing readership, no distribution beyond word of mouth, and no paid advertising, both Woody and I lost money on every issue. But to me, it was a success.

Everything you see in this collection was created decades ago, but I, for one, believe that every story holds up and stands out as a classic.

SAVAGE WORLD!




BEFORE THEIR STARTLED EYES A FIGURE FLOATS INTO VIEW... AND DISAPPEARS!
WHAT WAS THAT? COULD WE HAVE STUMBLED ON A RACE OF PEOPLE LIVING UNDER THE SURFACE?
WE MIGHT HAVE... IT... LOOK OUT!
THE STRUGGLE IS BRIEF AND SAVAGE...
RUN FOR IT, HELEN!
AND THEN..
GOOD. GREAT XANTOR WILL BE PLEASED THAT WE CAPTURED THEM ALIVE.
PROPELLED BY ANTI-GRAVITY BELTS, THE GROUP DECENDS EVER DEEPER INTO THE EARTH...
LARRY REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS...
WHAT?. A CITY! MUST BE MILES UNDER THE SURFACE... A HIDDEN CIVILIZATION...AND HIGHLY ADVANCED FROM THE LOOKS OF IT!
2


THEY ARE TAKEN BEFORE THE RULER...
WELCOME TO THE INNER WORLD! YOU NEED NOT FEAR US FOR WE DO NOT WISH TO HARM YOU...
LONG AGO WE, TOO, LIVED ON THE SURFACE, BUT WE WERE BACKWARD IN THE WAYS OF WAR...ONE DAY...
THE TRIBES FROM THE HILLS...
THEY ARE TOO MANY...WE MUST FLEE!
"OUR ANCESTORS DETERMINED NEVER TO RETURN TO THE SURFACE. CHANGES IN THE EARTH'S SURFACE OVER THE AGES HAVE SEALED US IN..."
"...AND WE ADAPTED TO A SUBTERREANEAN EXISTENCE..."
"FREE FROM THE SCOURGE OF WAR WE DEVELOPED OUR SCIENCE IN OTHER DIRECTIONS AND CARVED OUT THIS CIVILIZATION!"
NOW, GREAT EXPLOSIONS THREATEN TO DESTROY ALL THAT WE HAVE BUILT! WE BELIEVE YOU SURFACE MEN ARE RESPONSIBLE...
WE MUST KNOW WHY. ALL WE ASK IS THAT YOU SUBMIT TO A FEW TESTS...
3


IN A BLUR OF MOTION LARRY TURNS ON HIS CAPTORS...
GUARDS, QUICKLY! DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!
AND THEN...
THIS MACHINE WILL PROBE THE INNERMOST RECESSES OF HIS MIND AND MAKE VISUAL HIS UNCONSCIOUS FANTASIES.
"WHAT YOU SEE HERE ARE HIS RESPONSES TO OUR SUGGESTIONS"...
DANGER! WOMAN! FEAR! ANGER...
HIS REACTIONS ARE ALL VERY BRAVE...
...BUT VIOLENT! HE IS FULL OF AGGRESSION... ANGER...
...AND THIS IS A SCIENTIST, EDUCATED AND COMPARATIVELY CIVILIZED!
THEN HELEN IS TESTED IN THE SAME MANNER...
THE PATTERNS OF THE FEMALE ARE MUCH BETTER! WITH OUR PRESENT SHORTAGE OF WOMEN, PERHAPS SOMETHING CAN BE DONE...
4







LARRY RUNS UNTIL HE REACHES A DEAD END...



...THEN HE TURNS ON HIS PURSUERS LIKE A WOUNDED TIGER!











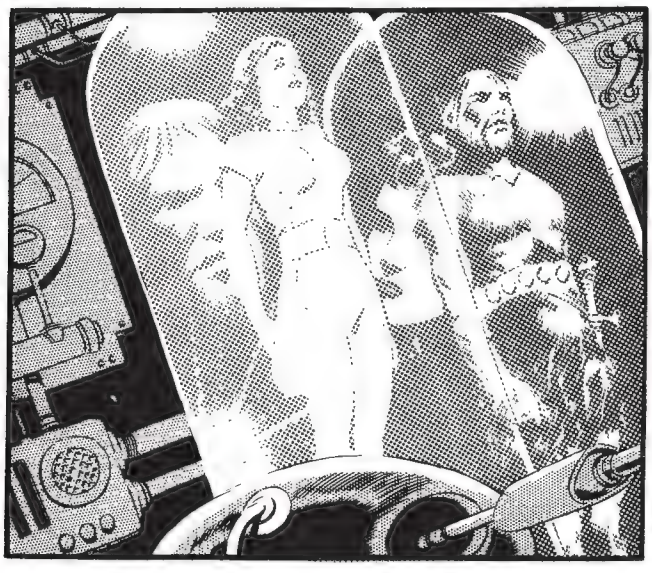
SEARCHING DESPERATELY THROUGH THE CITY, LARRY AT LAST FINDS THE SCIENCE BUILDING...



MEANWHILE A STRANGE RITE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN...



THE MACHINE IS ACTIVATED AND THE MIND OF EACH IS LAID OPEN TO THE OTHER, NAKED AND UNASHAMED...






BUT LARRY HAS FINALLY FOUND AN UNGUARDED ENTRANCE...
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE!
LARRY WAIT! I DON'T...
YOU POOR KID! WE'RE GOING NOW... AND I JUST WISH YOU CREEPS WOULD GIVE ME AN EXCUSE TO PULL THIS TRIGGER!
BUT SHE IS NOW MY SON'S WIFE! SHE WENT THROUGH THE CEREMONY! YOU CAN'T...
THEN, MARK ENTERS...
LARRY! OUR PAL HERE HAS VOLUNTEERED TO SHOW US THE WAY OUT... LET'S GO WHILE WE'RE STILL ABLE!
DAZED AND INCOHERENT, HELEN TURNS TO THE TWO MEN...
MARK! BLAST THE MACHINE!
RIGHT LARRY! THIS FILTH MUST BE DESTROYED!
YOU... YOU'RE EVIL!
OKAY... BUT LET'S DISCUSS IT LATER... WE'VE ONLY GOT A FEW MINUTES!
7


AS THEY RUN TOWARD THE EXIT INDICATED BY THEIR CAPTIVE...
THEY AREN'T AS PEACE-LOVING AS THEY CLAIMED! LOOK!
DONNING ANTI GRAVITY BELTS THEY HEAD FOR THE SURFACE...
FRESH AIR!... IT'S LIKE THE END OF A NIGHTMARE!
WHAT... WHERE AM I? THAT PLANE... IT'S--
YES, HELEN! THE TEST!
AND THEN, THE BLINDING FLASH OF THE BOMB...
LATER, AT THE HOSPITAL WHERE THEY ARE DECONTAMINATED AND TREATED...
NOW THAT I'M OVER THE SHOCK AND AFTER-EFFECTS, I MUST TELL YOU... ALL I SAW IN THAT MIND WERE TRUTH... AND BEAUTY... AND LOVE...
YOU'LL GET OVER IT, HELEN... IT'S SOME SORT OF HYPNOSIS!
NO, MARK... THINK ABOUT IT... THE QUALITIES THAT MAKE FOR SURVIVAL ALSO MAKE US INFERIOR TO THEM ... SAVAGES BY COMPARISON! WE'RE THE BAD GUYS!
THE END

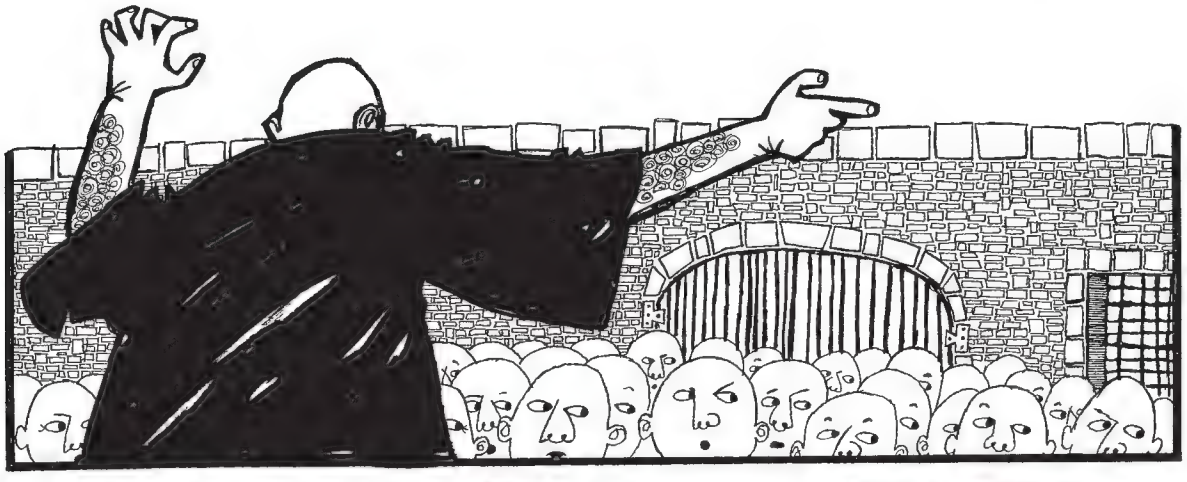
IT WAS TOMORROW. THE GREAT WAR SO LONG FEARED WAS OVER. DESPITE TREMENDOUS EFFORT FROM ALL PARTICIPANTS, THERE WERE SURVIVORS. THEY WERE SO SCARCE THAT WAR WAS ABANDONED. IN FACT, IT WAS COMPLETELY DISCOURAGED. THE PEOPLE GATHERED IN SMALL COMMUNITIES TO PRACTICE PEACE AND WORSHIP GOD. SUCH WAS HAPPY VALLEY...



THE PEOPLE MET ONCE A WEEK TO PRAISE GOD. THEY SANG THE FEW PRE-WAR HYMNS REMEMBERED, "PADRE" "CRYING IN THE CHAPEL" "I BELIEVE". BUT TODAY THEY WERE EXCITED. THEY RUSHED THROUGH THE SACRED HYMNS. TODAY WAS SPECIAL...



THE PREACHER ADDRESSED HIS PEOPLE. IT WAS A SAD DAY FOR HAPPY VALLEY. A DEFILER WAS IN THEIR MIDST! ONE OF THE VALLEY'S SHEEP HAD STRAYED FROM THE PATHS OF GOD AND WAS EXHIBTING MANY SIGNS OF PRE-WAR DECADENCE.



SINNER

"WELL" SAID THE SINNER "THAT'S A BIT THICK. ALL I'VE DONE IS PLAY MY GUITAR, SING, READ, AND TINKER WITH SOME OLD MACHINERY. THOSE MACHINES WOULD MAKE WORK EASIER SO WE COULD PLAY, SING, READ, AND MAYBE EVEN THINK MORE."



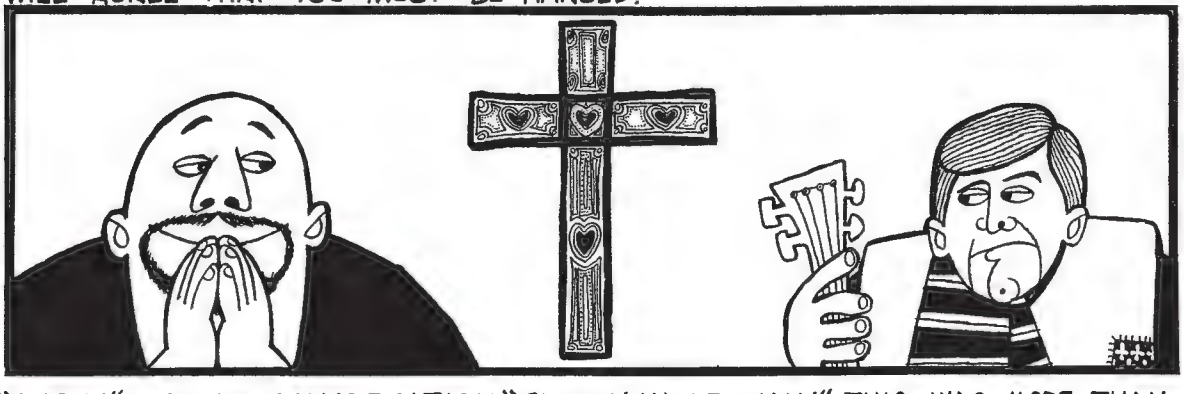
THE CROWD WAS SHOCKED TO HEAR SUCH BLASPHEMY. THIS WAS TRULY THE MOST EXCITING GOD'S DAY SINCE BEYOND MEMORY.



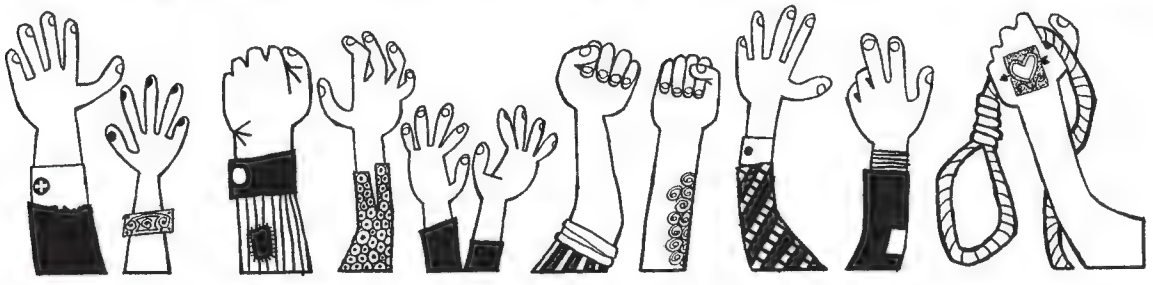
"SINNER!" CRIED THE PREACHER "THOSE ARE PRE-WAR THOUGHTS! SLAVERY TO THE MACHINE AND IDLE PLEASURES BROUGHT THE GREAT WAR AS PUNISHMENT! WE LIVE NOW ONLY TO WORK AND WORSHIP GOD!"



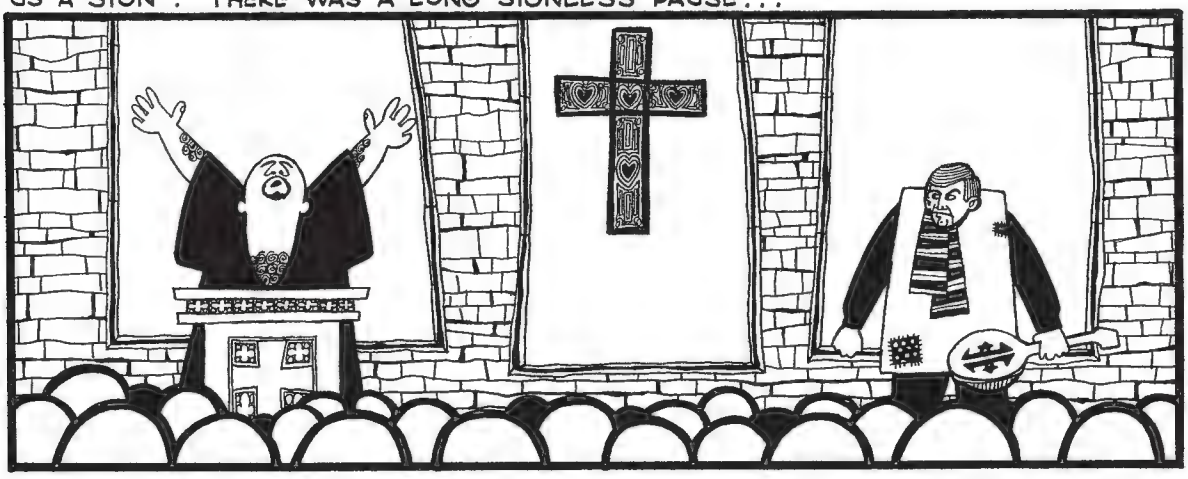
"I'M AFRAID, SINNER, YOU HAVE BROKEN GOD'S COMMANDMENTS. WE MUST MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF YOU OR ELSE OTHERS MAY MAKE THE SINS OF READING, PLAYING, AND MEDDLING WITH THE MACHINES. I THINK GOD AND HAPPY VALLEY WILL AGREE THAT YOU MUST BE HANGED!"



"AMEN!" SAID THE CONGREGATION "GLORY! HALLELUIAH!" THIS WAS MORE THAN ANYONE HAD HOPED FOR, A CHANCE TO SEE GOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN ACTION! AND EVERYONE IN HAPPY VALLEY COULD BE AVENGING SWORDS!



"BUT FIRST" SAID THE PREACHER "WE MUST MAKE SURE GOD WANTS US TO HANG THE SINNER". SOME OF THE LESS FAITHFUL MEMBERS WERE A TRIFLE DISAPPOINTED AND VOICED OBJECTIONS TO PESTERING GOD, BUT THE PREACHER CALLED FOR SILENCE. "GOD" SAID THE PREACHER "IF WE SHOULDN'T HANG THIS SINNER, GIVE US A SIGN". THERE WAS A LONG SIGNLESS PAUSE...

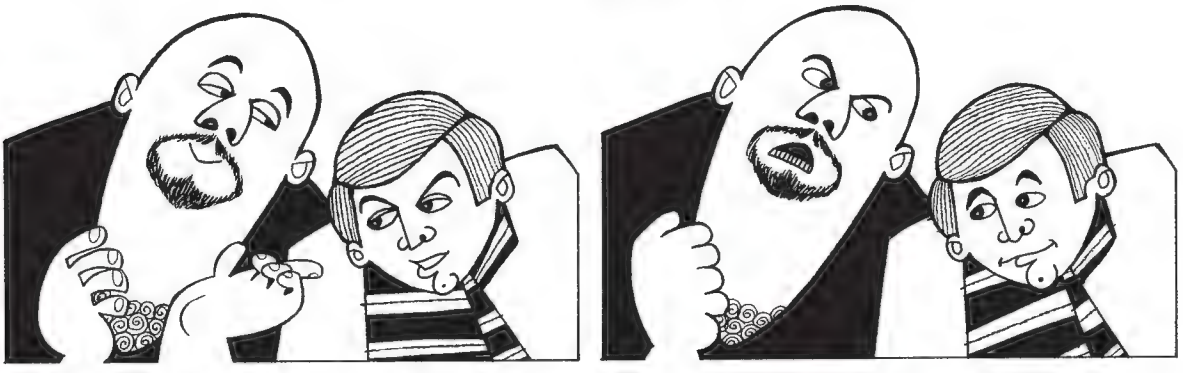


"GOD WANTS TO HANG THE SINNER. ANY LAST WORDS, SINNER?"

"I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D LET ME ASK GOD FOR A FEW SIGNS?"

"HE'D SEND DEATH AND DESTRUCTION ON US FOR ALLOWING SUCH A BLASPHEMER TO CALL UPON HIM!"

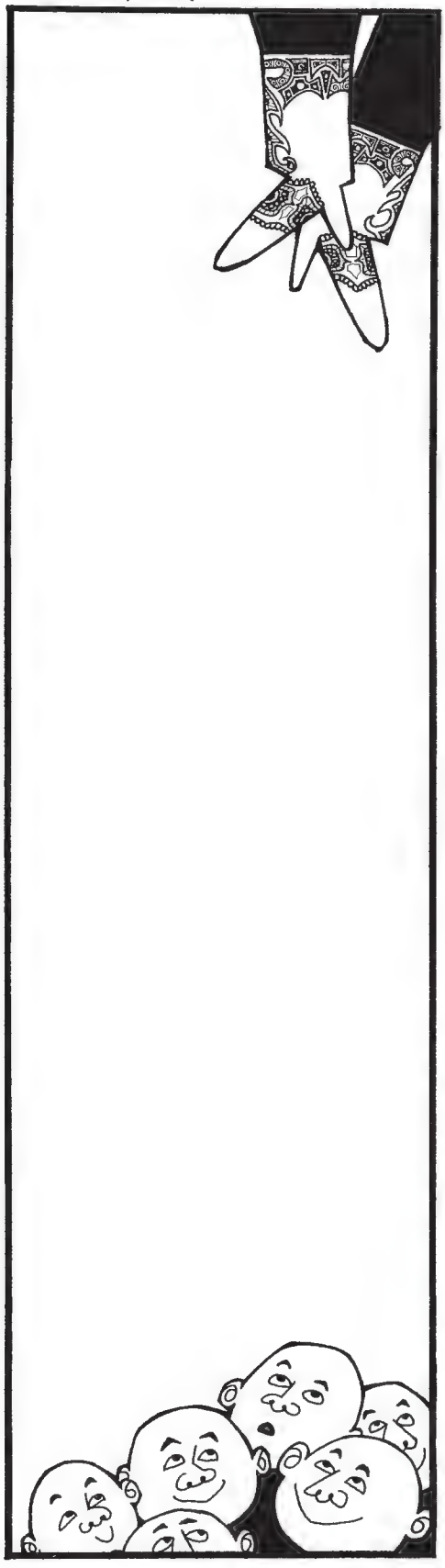
"I KIND OF THOUGHT IT MIGHT WORK OUT LIKE THAT..."



THE SINNER LOOKED AT THE PEOPLE OF HAPPY VALLEY. "THE VERY WORST THING ABOUT DYING IS THAT YOU STOP BUT THE REST OF THE WORLD GOES RIGHT ON AND YOU MISS ALL THE WONDERFUL CHANGES THAT WILL COME AFTER YOU. DYING CAN BE EASIER IF YOU KNOW PERHAPS YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP THE WORLD GROW AND CHANGE. FORTUNATELY, HAPPY VALLEY WON'T CHANGE. YOU'LL GO ON WORKING AND WORSHIPPING GOD, AND DOING NO PRE-WAR EVIL, AND I CAN DIE KNOWING I DIDN'T HELP THIS NON-CHANGE. IN FACT, I AGREE-- HANGING ME IS A PRETTY GOOD IDEA!"



BEING GOD-FEARING FOLK AND TRUE TO THEIR WORD, THE CONGREGATION PROMPTLY HANGED THE SINNER. ALL IN ALL IT HAD BEEN AN EXHILARATING WORSHIP SERVICE ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SOME DISATISFACTION DUE TO THE SINNER'S EXTREME WILLINGNESS TO BE HANGED.



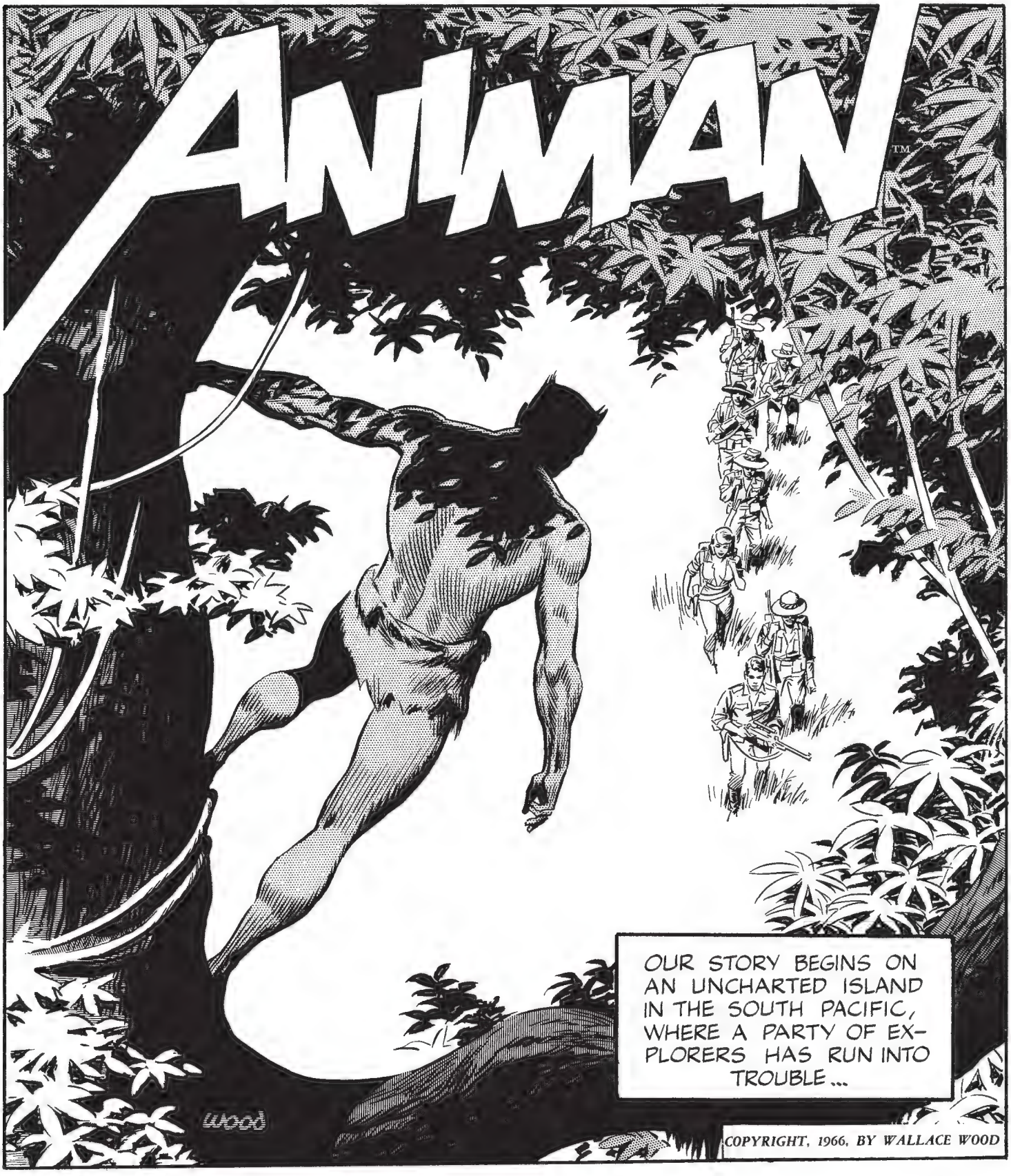
THEY BURIED HIM NEAR THE ENTRANCE OF THE VALLEY AND MARKED HIS GRAVE WITH ONE OF THE OLD SYMBOLS OF PRE-WAR DECADENCE AS A WARNING TO ALL OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THOSE WHO SIN BY PLAYING AND READING, AND TRYING TO REVIVE THE MACHINE . . .



GOD WAS IN HIS HEAVEN AND ALL WAS RIGHT WITH THE WORLD-- ESPECIALLY IN HAPPY VALLEY.

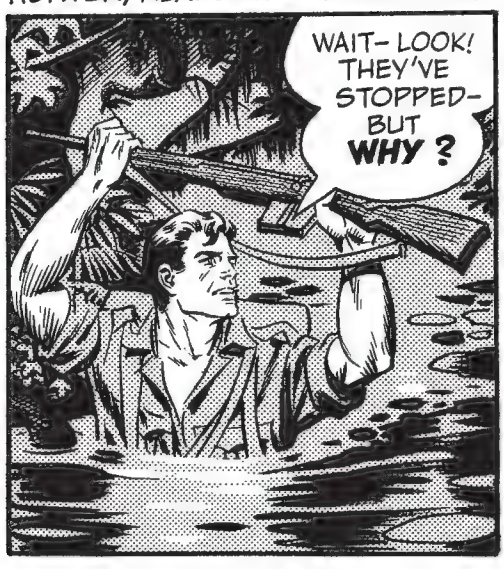
IS MAN THE ONLY INTELLIGENT CREATURE TO EXIST ON THIS PLANET? IN OUR SUPREME HUMAN EGOTISM, WE NEVER STOP TO CONSIDER THAT OUR ANTHROPOID ANCESTORS MIGHT NOT BE THE ONLY SPECIES TO HAVE EVOLVED.

THIS IS THE STORY OF A MONSTER... NEITHER MAN NOR BEAST, BUT WITH THE ATTRIBUTES OF BOTH, AND SUPERIOR TO BOTH! PICTURE A BEING WITH THE STRENGTH, REFLEXES AND SENSES OF A TIGER, AND THE CURIOUSITY AND ABILITY TO REASON OF A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT HUMAN BEING AND YOU HAVE-





JIM KING, LEGENDARY SOLDIER OF FORTUNE AND BIG GAME HUNTER, HEADS THE EXPEDITION...



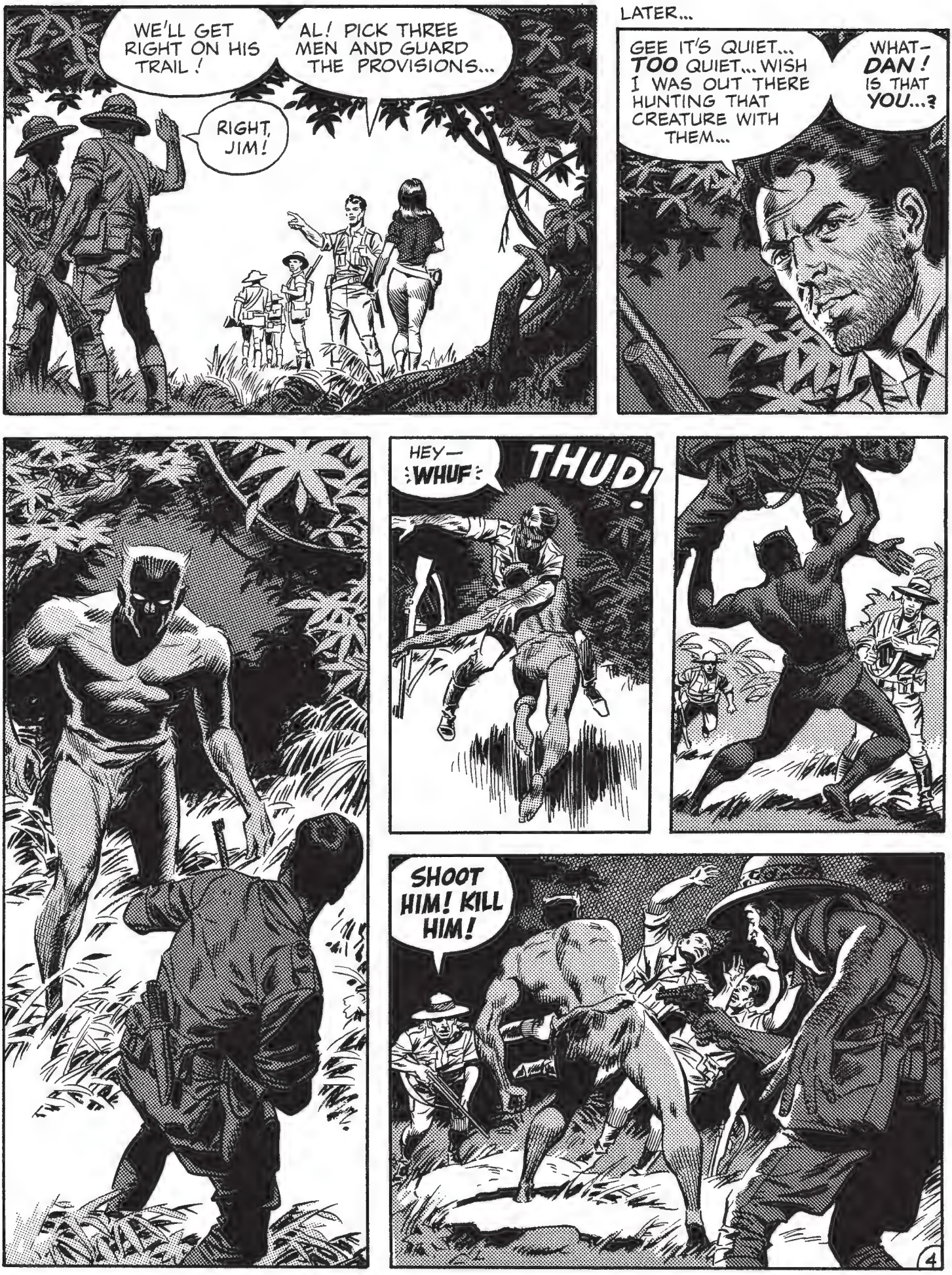
...WHICH INCLUDES MANY FAMOUS ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND ARCHAEOLOGISTS... SUCH AS PROFESSOR RALPH PEARSON OF COLUMBIA...



AND DR. CATHERINE LE MAY, WORLD'S FOREMOST AUTHORITY ON EXTANT PRIMITIVE TRIBES—




A PATH...
OF HUMAN SKULLS! IT'S A WARNING...
THIS IS FORBIDDEN TERRITORY!
THAT'S WHAT SCARED THOSE CAVE MEN OFF! WHAT DO WE DO NOW ?
WE CAN'T TURN BACK, IT'S CERTAIN DEATH! WE MUST GO ON!
BUT... WHOEVER... OR WHAT EVER LIES AHEAD MUST BE MORE TERRIBLE THAN...
WE HAVE NO CHOICE!
JIM! LOOK!
DON'T SHOOT, YOU FOOL!
CRACK!
CRACK!
I THINK I GOT IT!
I HOPE SO... LET'S HAVE A LOOK...
HERE'S THE SPOT! BLOOD! AT LEAST HE'S HUMAN...
I DON'T KNOW... FLESH AND BLOOD, YES... BUT HUMAN..?
...AND NOW IT'S GOT TO BE HIM OR US—
3


WE'LL GET RIGHT ON HIS TRAIL!
AL! PICK THREE MEN AND GUARD THE PROVISIONS...
RIGHT, JIM!
LATER...
GEE IT'S QUIET... TOO QUIET... WISH I WAS OUT THERE HUNTING THAT CREATURE WITH THEM...
WHAT— DAN! IS THAT YOU...?
HEY— WHUF
THUD!
SHOOT HIM! KILL HIM!
4

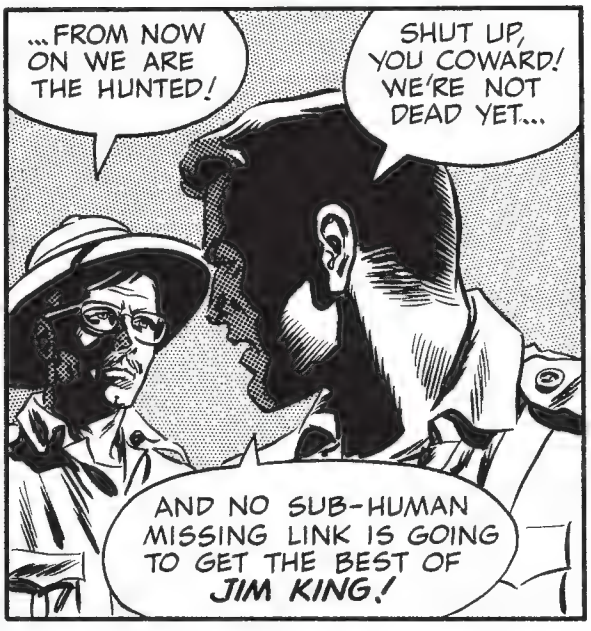






AS THE HUNTING PARTY RETURNS...

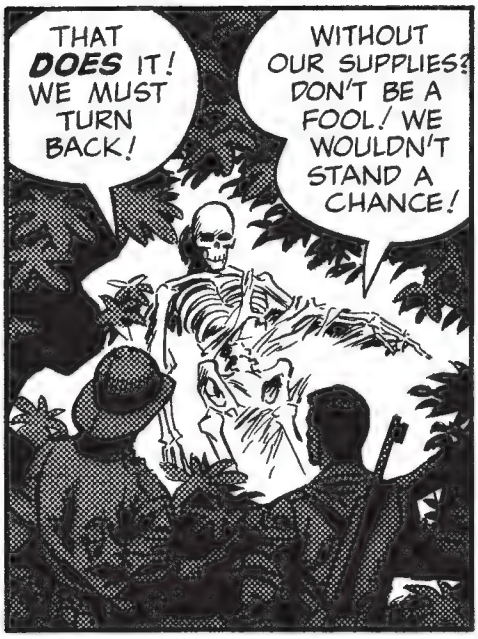


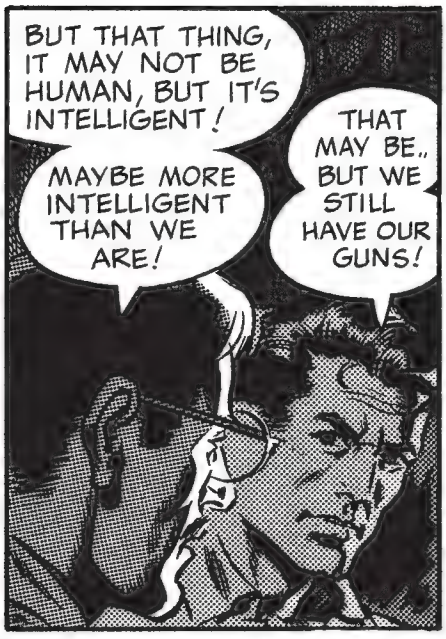




...AND NOW AND THEN THEY STUMBLE ON A GRUESOME REMINDER OF THE FATE THAT HANGS OVER THEM...









THE NEXT DAY THE FIRST GROUP COMES UPON...







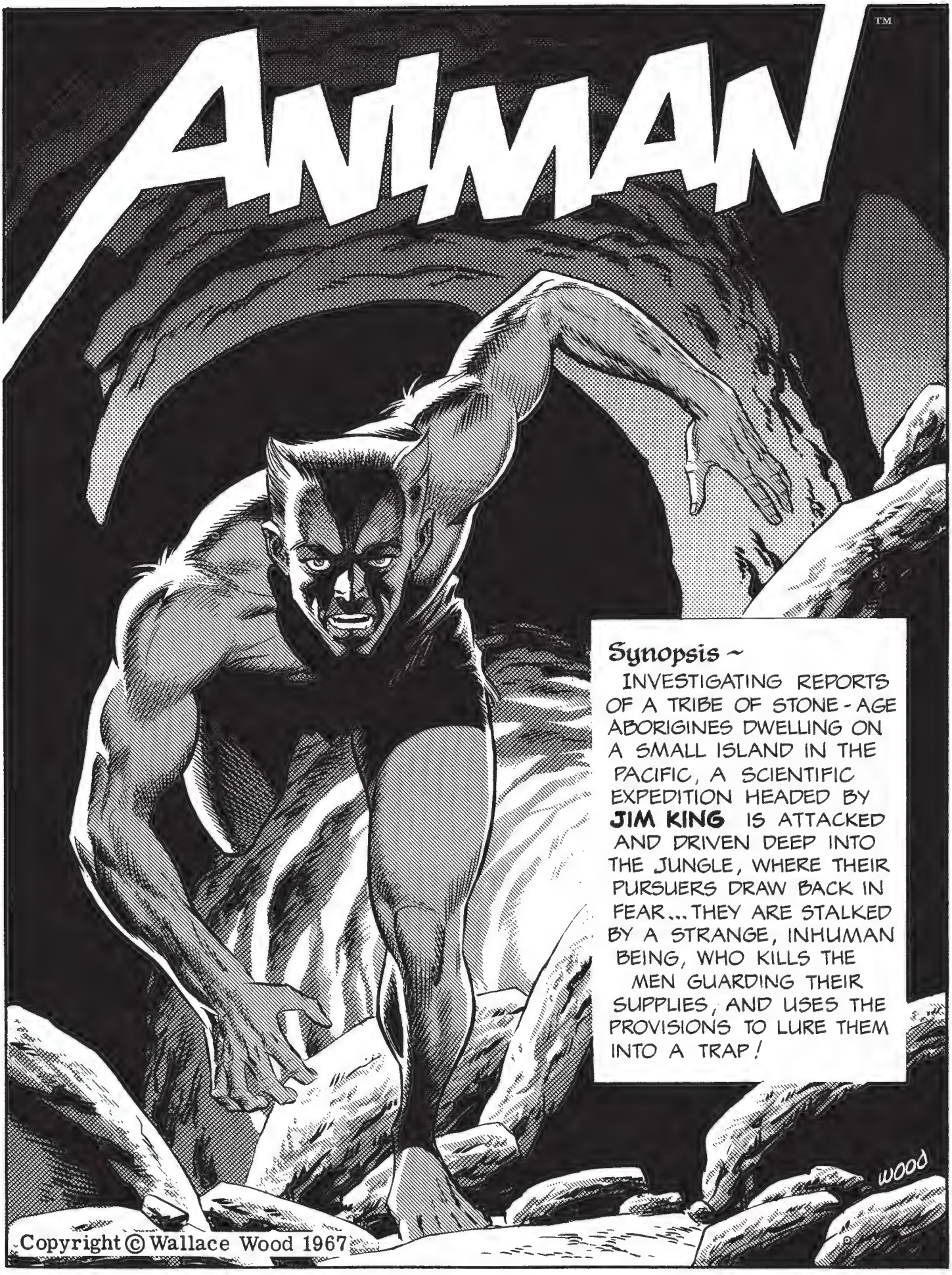
JIM MANAGES TO CLING TO THE EDGE OF THE PIT AS THE OTHERS PLUNGE TO THEIR DOOM...



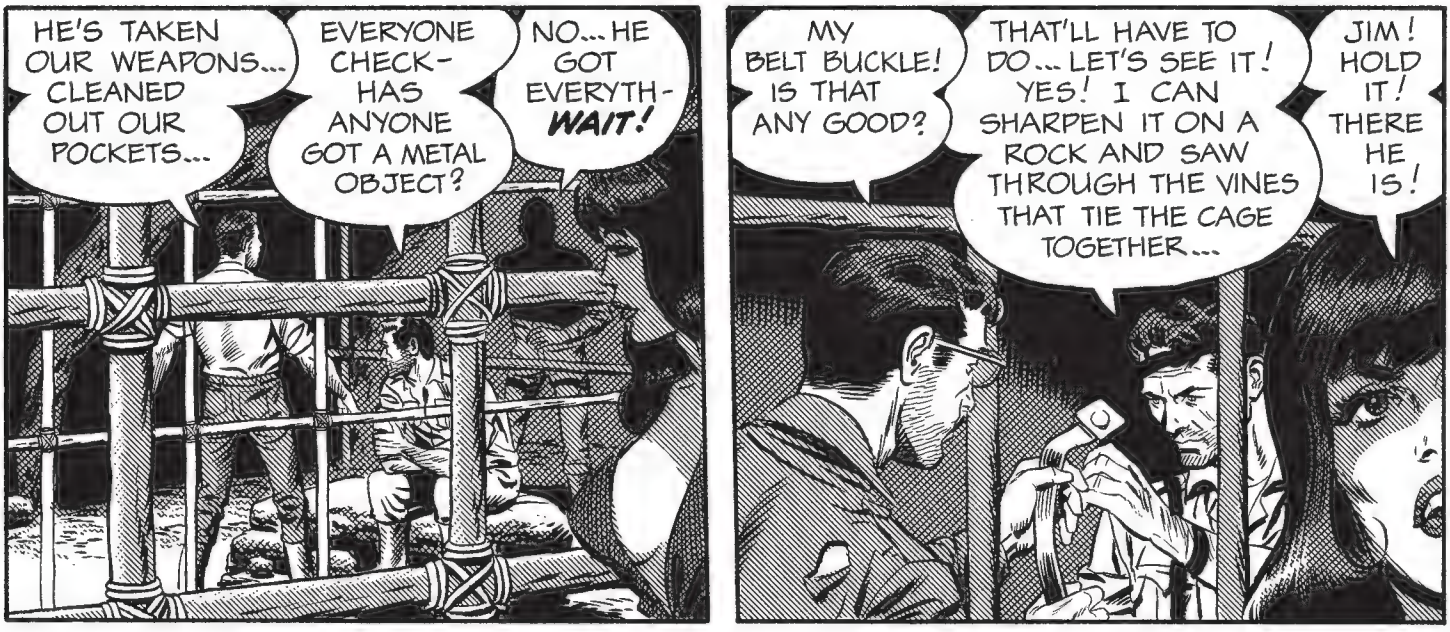
HOURS LATER A TATTERED, HALF-CRAZED FIGURE COMES UPON THE SECOND PARTY...




AFTER JIM HAS REVIVED AND REPORTED THE FATE OF THE OTHERS, THEY SET OUT AGAIN, WITH A TERRIBLE LUST FOR REVENGE IN THEIR HEARTS...
...AND SHORTLY THEY COME UPON..
LOOK- BY THAT CLIFF! ...OUR SUPPLIES!
THE MONSTER IS TRYING THE SAME TRICK AGAIN!
THIS TIME WE'LL GO AROUND HIS TRAP...
AS THEY STEP OFF THE TRAIL...
OH, NO!
YAAAAH!
THUD!
LATER, CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS...
OHH ...I'M ALIVE... BUT...
JIM STRUGGLES TO HIS FEET, AND A STRANGE SIGHT MEETS HIS EYES...
CATHY ... ED... IS EVERYONE HERE ?
YES... ALL OF THE ONES STILL ALIVE! OH, JIM! WHAT'LL WE DO NOW ?
WHAT LIES IN STORE FOR THEM ... AND FOR THE ANIMAL MAN? DON'T MISS THE NEXT INSTALLMENT!


ANTMAN
™
Synopsis ~
INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF A TRIBE OF STONE-AGE ABORIGINES DWELLING ON A SMALL ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC, A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION HEADED BY JIM KING IS ATTACKED AND DRIVEN DEEP INTO THE JUNGLE, WHERE THEIR PURSUERS DRAW BACK IN FEAR... THEY ARE STALKED BY A STRANGE, INHUMAN BEING, WHO KILLS THE MEN GUARDING THEIR SUPPLIES, AND USES THE PROVISIONS TO LURE THEM INTO A TRAP!
wood
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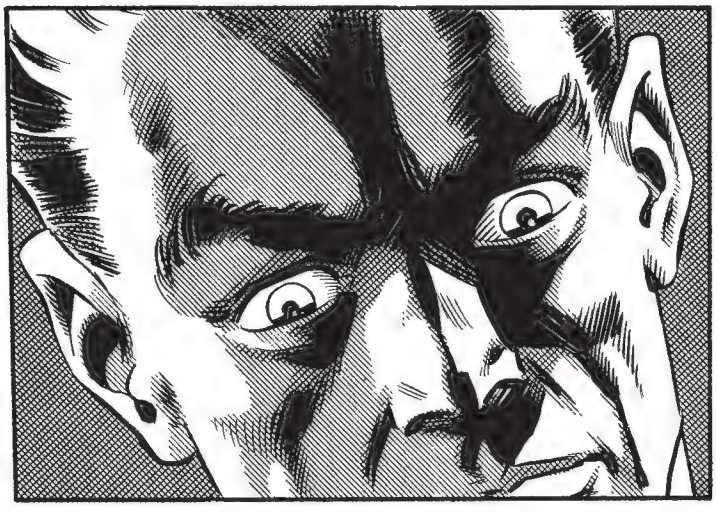




AND THEN THEY ALL ARE AWARE OF THE THING WATCHING THEM, STANDING MOTIONLESS AS A GRAVEN STATUE... MAJESTIC, SAVAGE, AND...TERRIFYING!



HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN REAL FEAR? FEAR THAT TURNS THE SPINE TO ICE...? THEY STARE INTO TWO BALEFUL SLITS AS COLD AND FORBIDDING AS THE SURFACE OF THE MOON.




FOR WHAT SEEMS AN ETERNITY THE CREATURE REGARDS THEM SILENTLY... AND THEN...
WHAT'S HE DOING?
HE'S TAKING A PISTOL APART... STUDYING IT...
...AND WITH SCIENTIFIC CURIOUSITY, I MIGHT ADD...
HE MUST WONDER HOW SUCH A THING COULD HAVE HURT HIM...
ARE YOU MAD, DOCTOR? THAT ANIMAL... SCIENTIFIC?
ANIMAL YOU SAY? LOOK!
HE'S PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER!
HE'S GONE...
I WONDER WHAT HE PLANS TO DO WITH US!
I JUST HOPE HE DOESN'T DECIDE TO TAKE ONE OF US APART...
NOW, KEEP TALKING... MAKE A RACKET! I'M GOING TO START SHARPENING THIS BUCKLE!
KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR HIM! LET ME KNOW WHEN HE'S COMING BACK!
WHEN WE GET OUT, KEEP HIM BUSY, AND WHOEVER IS IN THE CLEAR GO FOR THE PISTOL!
RIGHT! TOO BAD WE CAN'T TRY TO TAKE HIM ALIVE...
LATER...
IT'S WORKING! IT'S CUTTING THROUGH THE VINE! WE'LL BE OUT IN A MINUTE!
JIM! HERE HE COMES!
SILENTLY AND DELIBERATELY, THE ANIMAL MAN STALKS TO THE CAGE HOLDING THE GIRL...
CATHY! HE'S AFTER CATHY! WHAT-!?


UNRESISTING, SHE ALLOWS HERSELF TO BE LED OUT OF THE CAGE...
HE SEEMS TO BE INTRIGUED BY HER CLOTHING... HEY-!
STOP! YOU...!
OH!
AND AT THAT MOMENT...
GET TO THE WEAPONS!
TRY TO FREE THE OTHERS!
TRY TO KEEP HIM BUSY TILL I GET TO THAT PISTOL!
AS ANIMAN SCATTERS THE PITIFUL SCREEN OF HUMAN BODIES...
...ONE OF THE MEN GOES TO WORK ON THE OTHER CAGES...
YAAAA
POW!
POW!



THEN THE REST ARE UPON HIM...



BUT IT IS A HANDFUL OF MEN PITTED AGAINST THE SAVAGE STRENGTH AND LIGHTNING REFLEXES OF A TIGER!





THEN THE ANIMAL MAN IS IN THE CLEAR... AN OMINOUS SOUND MAKES HIM WHIRL...



...TOO LATE!

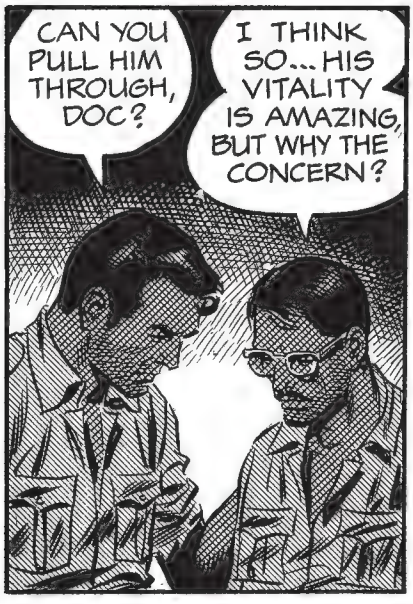






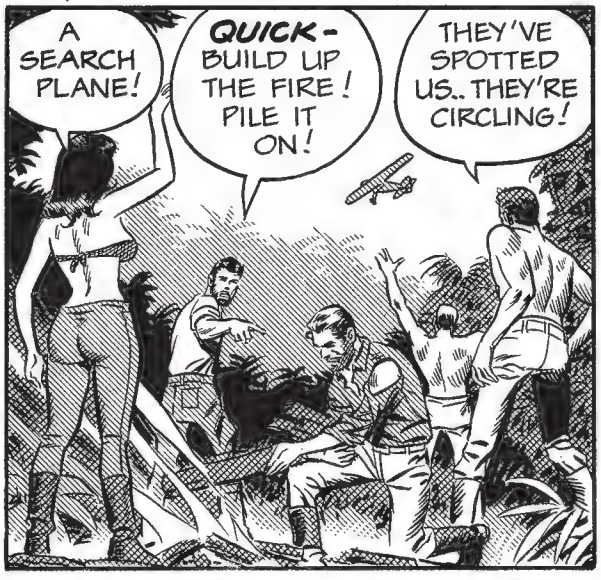


LATER...





WEEKS PASS IN AN AGONY OF WAITING, AND THEN ONE DAY...

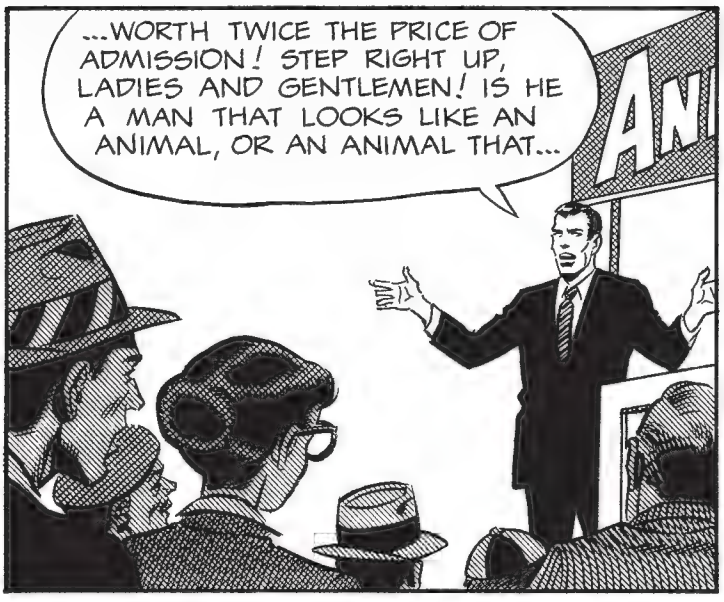


AND SO, PICKED UP BY HELICOPTER, TRANSFERED TO A HUGE JET TRANSPORT, THE ANIMAL MAN COMES TO THE UNITED STATES...





SOON 'ANIMAN' IS TOURING THE COUNTRY...



SILENTLY, WITH BURNING EYES, HE STUDIES THE PASSING PARADE...



...AND IS STUDIED IN TURN BY A TROUBLED CATHY, UNTIL ONE DAY...





AND SO, SHORTLY THEREAFTER...







THEN, ONE NIGHT...





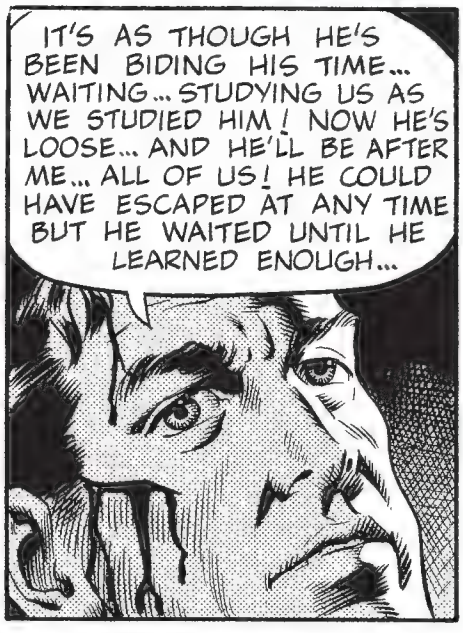

JIM KING IS NOT A MAN TO BE EASILY SHAKEN, BUT THEN A SOUND FREEZES HIM IN HIS TRACKS..
JIM KING!
...A SOUND LIKE NOTHING HEARD ON EARTH SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME... A SOUND UTTERED BY VOCAL CORDS NOT MEANT FOR HUMAN SPEECH, AND THE EFFECT IS ENOUGH TO MAKE ONE'S FLESH CRAWL...
DO... NOT... MOVE!
TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL AS THE TWO REGARD EACH OTHER... A LOW, WARNING RUMBLE BEGINS IN ANIMAN'S THROAT AS JIM'S HAND MOVES TOWARD HIS GUN...
RRRRRRRRR
MUSCLES LIKE STEEL SPRINGS RIPPLE UNDER THE LEATHERY HIDE... AND THEN - !
ROWR!
A BLUR OF ACTION...
KR-RUMF!
THE GUN... MUST GET...
CRUNCH!
THE ANIMAL MAN GRINDS JIM'S HAND INTO THE FLOOR UNTIL EVERY BONE IS CRUSHED...
NO! NO!
YAAAAAAAAH

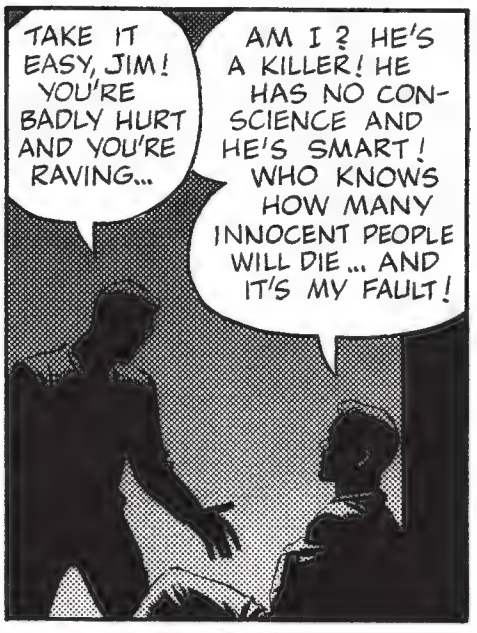
THE SOUND OF RUNNING FOOTSTEPS SAVES JIM'S LIFE...







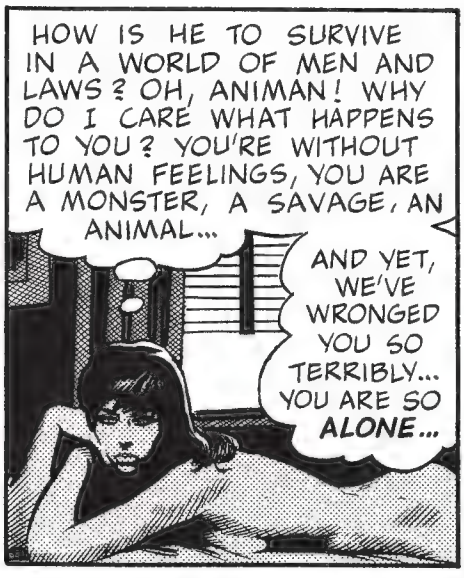




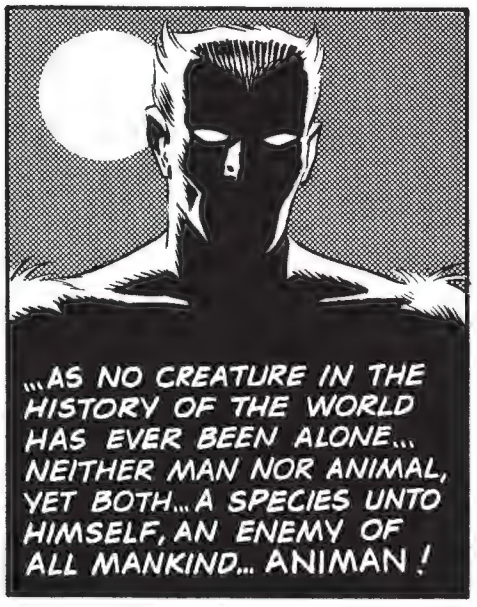
LATER, JIM REGARDS HIS CRIPPLED HAND...



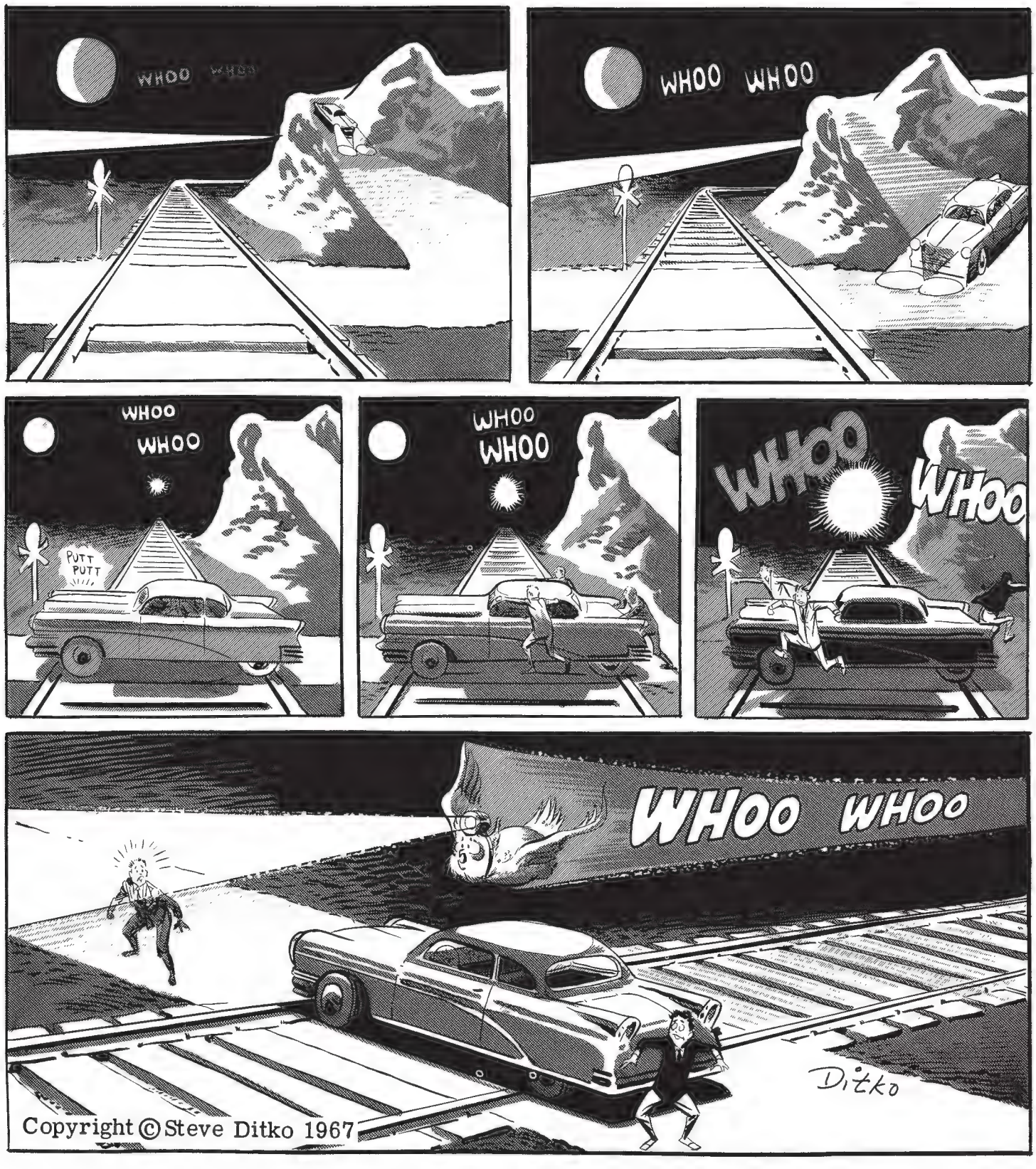
AS CATHY LEARNS OF THE ESCAPE...



YES... HE IS ALONE...



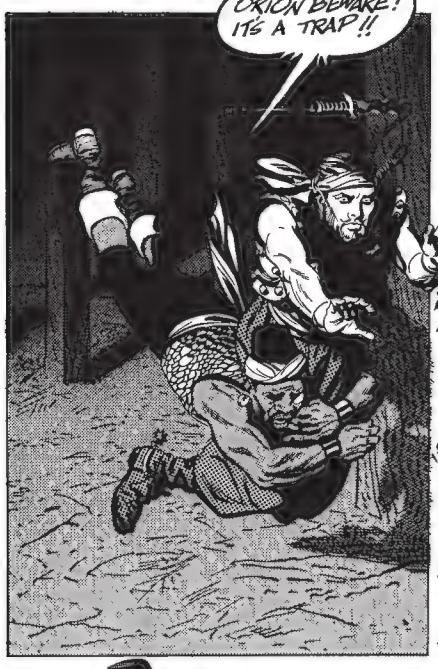
MIDNIGHT SPECIAL




ORION
©RION'S WORLD IS NOT OUR WORLD BUT ONE OF WHICH THE STUFF OF FANTASIES AND LEGENDS ARE MADE. HIS ENEMIES AND CONFLICTS ARE WROUGHT OF DEMONS AND SORCERIES, MORE PALPABLE HERE THAN COMPETITORS OR TENSION AND FRUSTRATION. HERE POWERFUL DARK GODS COMMAND MEN'S OBESIENSE AND MAGIC THEIR BELIEFS. THE SECRETS OF SCIENCE ARE PRIVY TO BUT A FEW..... AND EVERYONE KNOWS THEY ARE QUITE MAD.
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ORION'S NEVER-ENDING QUEST FOR THE SEVEN PORTALS TO THE SEVEN BRIDGES TO THE SEVEN STARS TO WHICH HIS FABULOUS SWORD **THORBOLT** IS THE KEY BRINGS HIM TO ISHANDRIA AND THE RED HORSE INN....(A MYTHICAL BEAST TO ISHANDRIANS.)
THE STORIES OF YOUR TRAVELS ARE ALL LIES OF COURSE, ORION. BUT MARVELOUS LIES, NONETHELESS. WHERE WILL YOU GO FROM HERE BREAKING MY POOR HEART?
YOUR LIES ARE PRETTIER YET THAN MINE, ASRA. THOUGH I'D MUCH LIKE TO BELIEVE YOU'D BE JUST A LITTLE SAD TO SEE ME GO, WHEN I LEAVE FOR **BALIMODRA** TONIGHT.


BALIMODRA! TONIGHT! NOW I KNOW YOU LIE! NO ONE GOES TO THAT DREAD PLACE EXCEPT.... EXCEPT.... OH!
AGRA, WHAT THE...??
AGRA, WAIT... WAIT! WHAT DID I SAY??
EXCUSE ME SIR, CRION IS IT NOT? LAMONTHOS IS MY NAME. DO I UNDERSTAND YOU JOURNEY TO BALIMODRA?
WHAT? ... OH, NOT TO IT, THROUGH IT, WHY?
A MOST FELICITOUS COINCIDENCE, SIR, AS I TOO JOURNEY TO KALDUS JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FURTHERMOST MOUNTAIN RANGE OF BALIMODRA. FORGIVE MY BOLDNESS BUT MIGHT AN OLD MAN PRESUME TO HOPE THAT AN EXPEDITIOUS ALLIANCE BE MADE? SAFETY IN NUMBERS, YOU KNOW.
SAFETY?
PLEASE, I DO NOT WISH TO OFFEND CAN IT BE THAT YOU'RE UNAWARE....
THE MAID'S ATTITUDE MUST HAVE GIVEN YOU THE CLUE... AH NO, I SEE YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND. BALIMODRA IS A DREAD LAND HARBORING NAMELESS TERRORS, RULED OVER BY MASTERS OF DARK ARTS AND VISITED ONLY BY OTHERS OF THAT SINISTER PERSUASION. YOUR FRIEND MISTOOK YOU FOR A WARLOCK!
AND YOU?
OH, I DO NOT SO MALIGN YOU, GOOD SIR. AS TO YOUR BUSINESS THERE I DO NOT INQUIRE. I MERELY PETITION YOU FOR PROTECTION AS FAR AS MY DESTINATION, FOR WHICH OF COURSE I WILL PAY HANDSOMELY.
A CUSTOM MORE VENERABLE EVEN THAN YOURSELF DOES NOT PERMIT REFUSAL OF SUCH A PETITION AMONG TRAVELERS OLD ONE. MEET ME WITHIN THE HOUR AT THE STABLE BEHIND THE INN AND WE RIDE FOR BALIMODRA.

SOMETIME LATER, AS ORION HEADS FOR THE STABLES AND HIS APPOINTMENT WITH LAMONTHOS....



FROM APPARENTLY INNOCENT SHADOWS MENACING FORMS SUDDENLY MATERIALIZE. AS ORION UNSHEATHES THORBOLT A BROODING RUMBLE AS OF DISTANT THUNDER CRACKLES ACROSS THE ELECTRIC TENSION CAUSING THE ATTACKERS TO FALTER INVOLUNTARILY, SOMEHOW LESS CONFIDENT NOW OF THEIR PREY.



THEN THE FLICKERING SHIMMERING STAB OF SUMMER LIGHTNING ENGAGES STEEL AND THE BATTLE IS JOINED.





COLD STEEL PROVES TO BE NO MATCH FOR THE FLAMING BLADE OF ORION AND THE REMAINING ASSAILANTS, UNMANNED BY THEIR FRIGHT, BOLT IN ABJECT TERROR.




YOUR WARNING WAS TIMELY AND DRAMATIC, MY FRIEND. ALMOST AS IF IT WERE... ...CONTRIVED.
PEACE, ORION! WHAT A SUSPICIOUS MAN YOU ARE! NOT WITHOUT SOME JUSTIFICATION, HOWEVER. MY WARNING OF THE SKULKERS WASN'T MERE HAPPENSTANCE. I WAS HIRED SAME AS THEY TO WAYLAY YOU BUT I'D HEARD OF YOU AND THE THUNDER AND LIGHTNING OF YOUR BLADE, ...MY FORMER COMPANIONS HAD NOT!
A MERCENARY LIKE MYSELF TURNS TO MANY MEANS FOR HIS EMPLOYMENT, BUT BACKSTABBING ISN'T THE STYLE OF MAMBA OF MEMBAHTU!.....ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M OVERMATCHED! BESIDES, IT MIGHT NOT BE TOO MUCH TO EXPECT FROM A MAN I SAVED, IF NOT FROM DEATH, CERTAINLY MUCH INCONVENIENCE TO BE .... AH, REASONABLY GRATEFUL.
YOU DON'T MISS A TRICK, MAMBA THE NAME OF YOUR PREVIOUS EMPLOYER MAY INCREASE MY GENEROSITY.
AH... THE OLD MAN WHO PETITIONED FOR YOUR PROTECTION AT THE INN.
AND THE REASON FOR THE ATTACK?
HE COVETS YOUR MAGIC BLADE.
THEN PERHAPS HE IS HIMSELF ONE OF THOSE HE PRETENDED TO WARN ME OF.
WHICH IS....?
A SORCERER!
AY YIII... WAIT!


WELL, NOW THAT YOU'VE COLLECTED ONCE TO TAKE MY LIFE AND ONCE TO SAVE IT, YOU OUGHT TO BE A TWICE-HAPPY MAN.
I'LL BE A THRICE-HAPPY ONE TO PUT SOME MILES BETWEEN ME AND THAT SORCERER. THEY HAVE UNPLEASANTLY IMAGINATIVE WAYS OF REPAYING A BAD TURN!
WELL, GOOD LUCK AND—
HOLD!
AH, MY DEAR ORION! CAN IT BE THAT YOU'VE FORGOTTEN OUR AGREEMENT, SIR?
YOU'VE VOIDED ANY CONTRACT BETWEEN US, OLD ONE. STAND ASIDE!
AS LAMONTHOS GESTURES OMINOUSLY, ORION CUES HIS MOUNT AND THE BEAST LEAPS, CLAWS FLAILING.....
AH ME, IT APPEARS THIS SCURRILOUS RASCAL HAS POISONED YOUR MIND AGAINST ME DEPENDABLE KNAVES ARE SO HARD TO GET THESE DAYS. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE MATTERS INTO MY OWN HANDS.



AND SO IT WAS THAT ORION THE WANDERER AND MAMBA THE MERCENARY MET AND BEGAN THEIR STRANGE ADVENTURES ON THAT FATEFUL NIGHT AT THE RIM OF BALIMODRA.... BLEAK, BROODING BALIMODRA WHERE MAMBA AND ORION FACE — AH, BUT THEN THAT IS YET ANOTHER TALE.....

Gypsy rambler
In your highway shoes
Passing through
What will you do
When you
Realize
There's no place left
To go
And nobody
To go with you
If there was?
Go ahead—
Walk away
From me



A mind
Standing open
I go in
To find its owner
And meet only
Locked closets
And empty rooms
Except for the
Bats
Erratic and
Aimless
Driving me
To music
Nobody home
And I thought
I was an
Oasis

All right then
Leave
But just don't call me
Baby
In your goodbye
As you leave me stranded
In this drunken desert
With nothing but
Myself
To hold on to
And not even a
Handful
Of that
and when they ask me
All I'll tell them is
More or less
The same as ever.

The Ghosts of future
Could-be lovers,
Their substance as yet unresolved,
Condemned to wander,
Forever falling,
Always calling,
Seducing me
Inducing me
To please not stop
Believing in them
Lest they drop from sight
And be lost forever,
Convincing me
What a fine thing
Loneliness
Can be,
As I wait
So patiently
For them to become
Three Dimensional.

In worldly-wizened air condition
The Wizard of the Wierd
Meditates on his position
And strokes his long grey beard.
The mealy mouth moves with a creak
And slowly sallies forth,
So blandly it begins to speak,
"I think, for what it's worth,
That those too deadly dumb to die
Most often go beserk,
But no one seems amused much by
The queerness of this quirk."

poetry by
RALPH REESE

illustration by
LEO and DIANE DILLON

prophesies
of the past
rattling in the static
that comes
when the buttons
are pushed
fading
as a candle
in the silent explosion
of future's dream
with never a
rhyme or reason
and the face of
society
frozen in mirthless glee.

A summer's day
A rainy night
And it's over
Already
And that was
All there is
A face
Lips moving
But words are
Gone
Only sounds
And the eyes
Dying
Say a silent prayer
For peace
A kiss
A moment
But always
A chasm
And no wings
And nothing
To remember

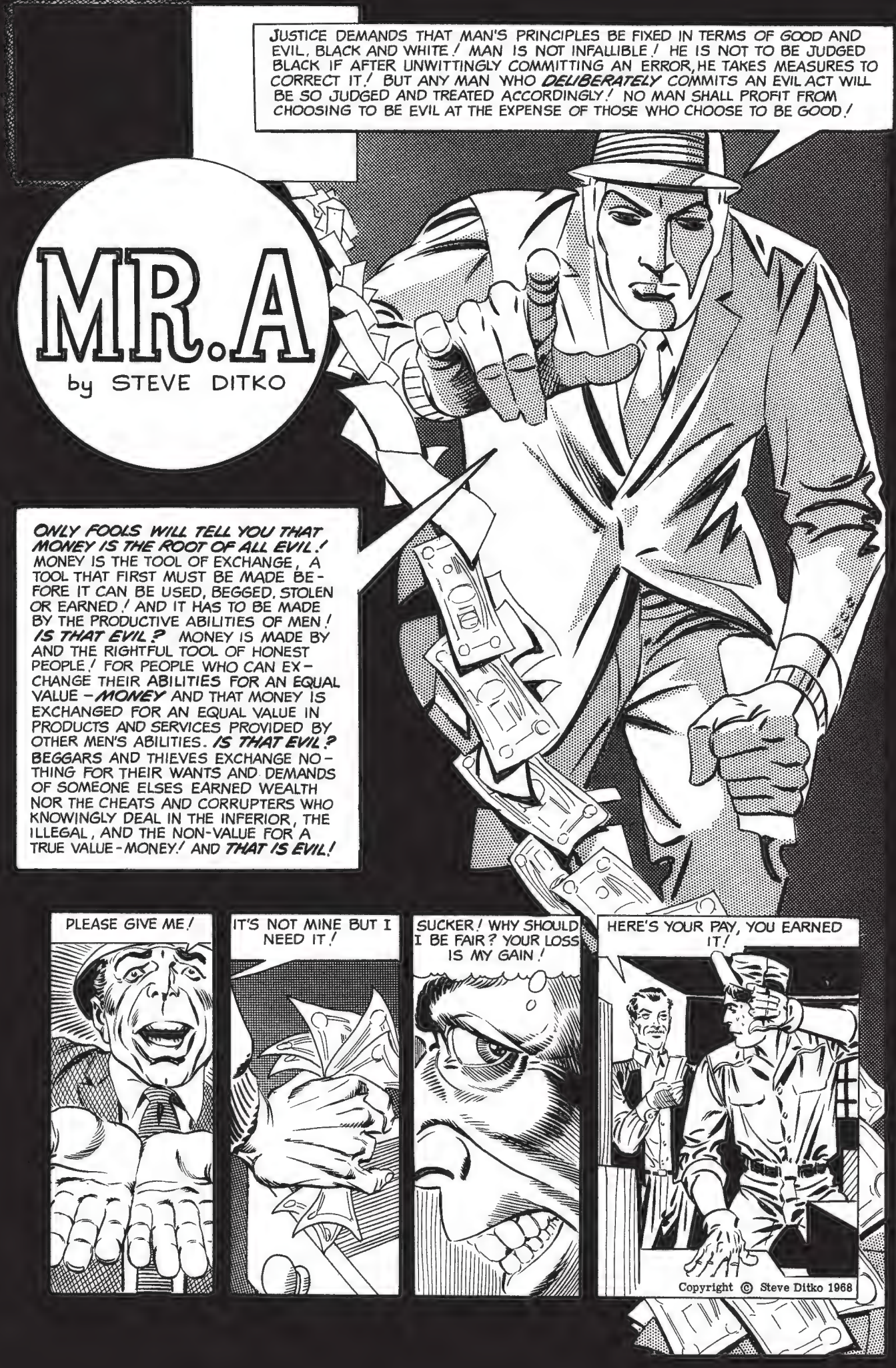

MR.A.
by Ditko
FOOLS WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE CAN BE NO HONEST PERSON! THAT THERE ARE NO BLACKS OR WHITES..... THAT EVERYONE IS GRAY! BUT IF THERE ARE NO BLACKS OR WHITES, THERE CANNOT EVEN BE A GRAY... SINCE, GRAYNESS IS JUST A MIXTURE OF BLACK AND WHITE! SO WHEN ONE KNOWS WHAT IS BLACK, EVIL, AND WHAT IS WHITE, GOOD, THERE CAN BE NO JUSTIFICATION FOR CHOOSING ANY PART OF EVIL! THOSE WHO DO SO CHOOSE, ARE NOT GRAY BUT BLACK AND EVIL ...AND THEY WILL BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY!
ANGEL, THE COPS SPOTTED US COMING OUT OF THE JEWELRY STORE WINDOW!
SO WHAT? THEY'LL HAVE TO CATCH US TO PROVE IT!
YOU SURE IT WAS ANGEL YOU SAW, MIKE? OKAY, YOU TAKE THIS SIDE!
ANGEL! COME OUT! MAKE IT EASY ON YOURSELF! DON'T BE FOOLISH... YOU CAN'T GET AWAAA...
*@☆%☼ COPS! LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. ALWAYS PICKING ON ME...TELLING ME WHAT TO DO! NOT THIS TIME!
COME ON, STUPID! THAT'S ONE COP THAT WON'T BOTHER ANYONE AGAIN!
WHY DID YOU DO IT? WE COULD OF GOT AWAY... WHY?
MIKE..MIKE! MY GOD, MIKE!!! WE'LL GET HIM MIKE... WE'LL GET HIM...
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NO, NOT MY ANGEL! HE'S A GOOD BOY.. A MOTHER KNOWS! YOU'RE LYING!
YOU COPS ARE AFRAID OF GROWN UP CRIMINALS SO YOU BLAME CRIMES ON KIDS!
AND YOU GET YOUR KICKS, HUNTING THEM DOWN LIKE THEY'RE MAD DOGS! YOU HURT MY BOY...
MY ANGEL'S INNOCENT! GOD KNOWS HE IS!
GET ANGEL TO TURN HIMSELF IN!
AT A WELFARE CENTER...
IT'S THE ENVIRONMENT! IT'S RESPONSIBLE FOR CRIMINALS! WE SHOULD SPEND WHAT WE NEED TO BUILD PLAY-GROUNDS, CHURCHES PARKS, RECREATION CENTERS. YES, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! ANGEL'S HEART IS GOOD! HE'S A VERY SENSITIVE BOY AND HE FEELS THINGS VERY DEEPLY!
DON'T QUESTION, ACCEPT & BELIEVE!
FAITH IS PROOF!
DON'T THINK, FEEL!
BALONEY! ENVIRONMENT IS JUST A BUNCH OF FACTS! IT'S NOT WHAT A PERSON SEES THAT DETERMINES HIS CHARACTER ... IT'S THE THINKING HE DOES, OR FAILS TO DO, ABOUT WHAT HE SEES! YOU SHOULD'VE GOT ANGEL TO USE HIS HEAD TO THINK WITH INSTEAD OF HIS SENSITIVE FEELINGS OR HEART!
IN THE BACKROOM OF A LOCAL PAWN SHOP..
YOU'RE A LIAR, MORG! YOU'RE MIXED UP IN A FENCING SET UP.. TAKING THE STUFF KIDS STEAL, AND ANGEL IS ONE OF THEM!
I KNOW NOTHING! I'M CLEAN AND YOU CAN'T PROVE OTHERWISE..COP!
AND I DON'T SCARE! I KNOW MY RIGHTS! NO ONE PUSHES ME AROUND! AND I DON'T LIKE YOU GUYS COMING HERE.. YOU GIVE MY PLACE A BAD NAME!
YOU'LL SLIP YET, MORG! YOU'RE TOO GREEDY NOT TO!
IF ANYONE KNEW I WAS WITH ANGEL! WHY DID HE HAVE TO DO IT?!
A LITTLE LATER
MORG... HE..HE GIVE ME THIS...
THIS CARD... IT'S THE CALLING CARD OF...OF
MR. A!
WHERE'S ANGEL HOLED UP AT?


DON'T WASTE MY TIME! I WANT ANGEL!
LOOK HERE, A, I KNOW NOTHIN'... NOW GET OOOO!
IT'S MR. A!
MORG'S BLUFF DIDN'T WORK THIS TIME, BUT WE CAN TAKE HIM!
DON'T MAKE ME ASK AGAIN!
MR. A, GULP! EVERYONE SAYS HE NEVER GIVES A CROOK A BREAK! IF HE FINDS OUT ABOUT ME...
HERE'S YOUR ANSWER! WHA-? THAT MASK HE'S WEARING MUST BE ARMOR!
YOU SCUM WANT IT THAT WAY, DO YOU!
EVERYONE JUMP HIM, AT ONCE! SMAAA--!
IF THIS IS THE KIND OF DISCUSSION YOU SCUM WANT... YOU'LL GET IT!
I WON'T REPEAT THE QUESTION, MORG!
I'LL KILL YOAAAH!
STOP HIM! STOP THIS MADMAA--!
WHAT WILL HE DO TO ME IF HE FINDS ANGEL AND ANGEL TELLS HIM ABOUT ME??
NOW, SCUM, THAT LEAVES JUST YOU... AND ME!
I SWEAR TO GOD I DON'T KNOW. BELIEVE ME!! I DON'T!
NO! NO! I'LL TALK! I'LL TELL WHERE ANGEL'S HIDING!
I HAVE TO WARN ANGEL! I CAN'T LET MR. A GET HIM.. OR ME!


WHILE IN AN EMPTY BUILDING...
ANGEL! I HOPED I'D FIND YOU HERE! ANGEL, IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY?
MISS KINDER, NO! I DIDN'T KILL THAT COP! I SWEAR IT! BUT NOBODY EVER BELIEVES ME!
I MADE ONE MISTAKE! NOW I ALWAYS GET THE BLAME! HONEST, MISS KINDER, I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
YOU POOR BOY! I UNDERSTAND, ANGEL, YOU CAN BE EASILY.... DEEPLY HURT... AND PEOPLE CAN BE SO CRUEL!
I TRY TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT! GOD KNOWS I TRY! BUT I NEVER GET ANY BREAKS! NO ONE HAS FAITH IN ME!
I DO, ANGEL, AND I WANT TO HELP YOU! I WON'T LET THEM DESTROY YOUR SENSITIVE NATURE!
ANGEL, MR. A IS COMING FOR YOU! HE KNOWS YOU KILLED THAT COP.. YOU GOT.. MISS KINDER?!
ANGEL!! IS THAT TRUE?? DID YOU...
YOU STUPID BIG-MOUTH! YOU BLABBED EVERYTHING!
NO, ANGEL! I'M YOUR PAL! CAME TO WARN YOU! PLEASE, ANGEL, LISTEN!
☆@№*! LIAR!
NO ANGEL DON..
NO, AAAA
SHUT UP OR YOU'LL GET THE SAME! NOW GET UP TO THE ROOF! MOVE!
ANGEL! WHAT'S COME OVER YOU? I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU LIKE THIS!
DON'T TRY ANYTHING! JUST MOVE!
OH, ANGEL, HOW COULD YOU.... WHA!
IT'S.... GET OUTTA MY WAY! I SAID GET--!
NO, ANGEL, I CAN'T LET YOU.. AAAA--!
4


I'LL KILL YOU! I'LL KILL ANYONE WHO GETS IN MY WAY- AH!
YOUR GOALS NEVER WERE REALISTIC!
HELP! PLEASE HELP ME! I CAN'T HOLD ON!
IT'S A BAD CUT! YOU NEED A DOCTOR!
HELP! SAVE ME! PLEASE!
ANGEL! YOU MUST SAVE ANGEL!
THE TIME IT TAKES TO SAVE ANGEL COULD MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IF YOU LIVE OR DIE! DO YOU WANT TO DIE HERE ....TO SLOWLY BLEED TO DEATH WHILE I TRY TO SAVE ANGEL! YOU TELL ME ... YES... OR NO!
THE CHOICE IS YOURS. WHO DO YOU WANT TO LIVE? IT CAN'T BE BOTH OF YOU! TELL ME WHO IS TO DIE? WHO?
I-I-I OOOH GOD HELP ME.. I-CAN'T SAY!
NO, YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE! BUT YOU'RE ASHAMED TO SAY YOU WANT TO LIVE! LEFT TO YOU ... YOU'D MAKE NO DECISION! YOU'D RATHER LET YOURSELF DIE THAN ADMIT YOUR LIFE IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU THAN THE LIFE OF A KILLER!
IT'S... NOT FAIR TO HAVE TO MAKE THAT.. CHOICE!
WHO SHOULD MAKE IT FOR YOU? WHO SHOULD DECIDE IF YOU LIVE OR DIE! EVERYONE BUT YOU?
BUT ANGEL, POOR ANGEL, I-I FAILED HIM - I'M SORRY, ANGEL, I'M SORRY!
SAVE ME!..
YOU'RE CRUEL! YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MERCY OR PITY...
I DON'T ABUSE MY EMOTIONS!
I HAVE NO MERCY OR COMPASSION FOR AGGRESSORS... ONLY FOR THEIR VICTIMS...FOR THE INNOCENT! TO HAVE ANY SYMPATHY FOR A KILLER IS AN INSULT TO THEIR VICTIMS. EVEN IF YOU WEREN'T HURT... I WOULDN'T HAVE SAVED ANGEL!
AAAAAAHHHH
End


JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT MAN'S PRINCIPLES BE FIXED IN TERMS OF GOOD AND EVIL, BLACK AND WHITE! MAN IS NOT INFALLIBLE! HE IS NOT TO BE JUDGED BLACK IF AFTER UNWITTINGLY COMMITTING AN ERROR, HE TAKES MEASURES TO CORRECT IT! BUT ANY MAN WHO DELIBERATELY COMMITS AN EVIL ACT WILL BE SO JUDGED AND TREATED ACCORDINGLY! NO MAN SHALL PROFIT FROM CHOOSING TO BE EVIL AT THE EXPENSE OF THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO BE GOOD!
MR. A
by STEVE DITKO
ONLY FOOLS WILL TELL YOU THAT MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL! MONEY IS THE TOOL OF EXCHANGE, A TOOL THAT FIRST MUST BE MADE BEFORE IT CAN BE USED, BEGGED, STOLEN OR EARNED! AND IT HAS TO BE MADE BY THE PRODUCTIVE ABILITIES OF MEN! IS THAT EVIL? MONEY IS MADE BY AND THE RIGHTFUL TOOL OF HONEST PEOPLE! FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN EXCHANGE THEIR ABILITIES FOR AN EQUAL VALUE – MONEY AND THAT MONEY IS EXCHANGED FOR AN EQUAL VALUE IN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHER MEN'S ABILITIES. IS THAT EVIL? BEGGARS AND THIEVES EXCHANGE NOTHING FOR THEIR WANTS AND DEMANDS OF SOMEONE ELSES EARNED WEALTH NOR THE CHEATS AND CORRUPTERS WHO KNOWINGLY DEAL IN THE INFERIOR, THE ILLEGAL, AND THE NON-VALUE FOR A TRUE VALUE - MONEY! AND THAT IS EVIL!
PLEASE GIVE ME!
IT'S NOT MINE BUT I NEED IT!
SUCKER! WHY SHOULD I BE FAIR? YOUR LOSS IS MY GAIN!
HERE'S YOUR PAY, YOU EARNED IT!
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IN THE BUSINESS OFFICE FRONT OF RACKETEER, LEW BAGGOT.
NOT A BAD WEEKS EARNINGS FROM THE HOT CAR OPERATIONS, DOPE, GAMBLING AND FENCING SETUPS, RODEN, AND IT'S GOING TO GET BETTER.
I'M WORRIED. REX GRAINE, THE REPORTER IS STIRRING UP TROUBLE FOR YOU. THERE'S TALK THE D.A.'S PUSHING A SECRET INVESTIGATION. LEW, I TOLD YOU TO TAKE IT EASY.
YOU TELL ME NOTHING, RODEN. YOU'RE ONLY MY LAWYER, I PAY YOU TO GET ME OUT OF HOT SPOTS. HERE, THIS BUYS ANSWERS. FIND OUT WHAT THEY GOT ON ME.
BRIBERY!? IT'S TOO RISKY, LEW. IF I GET CAUGHT, I'LL BE DISBARRED.
CAN THAT "ETHICS" GARBAGE, YOU'VE ALREADY SOLD OUT. BESIDES, YOU'RE HOLDING ALL THE ETHICS IN THE WORLD... MONEY. IT BUYS AND MAKES EVERYTHING RIGHT. NOW START PROTECTING THE HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING YOU ENJOY BY WORKING FOR ME.
ICER, I HAVE A JOB FOR YOU AND KREBS. LATER, I MAY WANT TO BUY YOUR GUN.
I'M ALWAYS FOR HIRE, LEW. YOU FEED ME THE DOUGH AND I'LL FEED YOUR PROBLEM LEAD POISONING.
HERE, HALF'S YOURS TO SPLIT. I WANT A PEST REPORTER WISED UP. NOTHING FATAL, YET.
WE WON'T TOUCH HIM UNLESS HE INSIST ON REMAINING POOR AND HONEST.
WHILE AT ONE OF THE CITYS NEWSPAPERS.
GREAT, REX, IT'S ANOTHER SCORCHING ARTICLE ON BAGGOT. I JUST HOPE WE GET ACTION FROM THE D.A. BEFORE "HONEST" HENRY MAKES US DROP THIS RACKET SERIES.
WHAT'S BOTHERING OUR FEARLESS PUBLISHER THIS TIME, MAX?
HE SAYS HIS WIFE FEELS THE PUBLIC IS TIRED OF READING ABOUT THE SAME PEOPLE AND PROBLEMS, THAT WE NEED A NEW CRUSADE TO HOLD THE READERS.
DAILY CRUSADER
DAILY CRUSADER
THE OLD STORY. A CANCEROUS SORE BECOMES TOO UNSIGHTLY SO WE COVER IT UP, HOPING IT WILL JUST GO AWAY WHILE WE LOOK FOR SOME OTHER DISEASE TO CURE AND SOON THAT ONE WILL BE COVERED OVER AND THE PATTERN GOES ON. NEVER A CURE AND THE HIDDEN DISEASES ARE SPREADING UNCHECKED, CONTAMINATING EVERYTHING UNTIL NO HEALTHY AREA REMAINS. NOT IN A MAN, NOT IN A SOCIETY. BUT I WON'T BE PUT OFF. I'LL FIND A WAY TO STOP BAGGOT.


GRAINE, I GOT A MONEY MAKING TIP FOR YOU AND IT WON'T COST YOU ANY-THING!
SOMETHING THAT I CAN GET FROM SOMEONE FOR NOTHING IS USUALLY JUST WORTH THAT MUCH!
THIS COULD BE YOURS! YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK FOR IT AND THERE'S MORE WHERE THIS COMES FROM!
THAT'S PARASITES WAGES! I'D BE A LEECH LIKE YOU AND YOUR BOSS, BAGGOT! THERE'S MORE DIGNITY IN BEING A SLAVE THAN ONE OF YOUR BREED!
TAKE IT STUPID, AND STAY HEALTHY OR WE'LL FIND OTHER WAYS OF DEALING WITH YOU!
THERE'S ONLY TWO WAYS...MUTUAL CONSENT OR FORCE! I DON'T AGREE TO DEAL WITH BAGGOTS OR HIS KIND!
I'LL SIGNAL KREBS!
HEY GRAINE!
I WAS HOPING HE'D TURN THE OFFER DOWN!
OKAY, PUNK, WHAT MONEY CAN'T BUY THIS KIND OF TREATMENT ALWAYS DOES!
YOU'LL COUNT STARS INSTEAD OF BILLS, THE ONLY KIND YOU'LL GET NOW WILL BE FROM YOUR DOCTOR!
BAGGOT DESERVES TO GET HIS MONEYS WORTH FROM US.
STUPID PUNK! HE HAD TO LEARN THE HARD WAY... THERE'S NO PROFIT IN TRYING TO STAY HONEST!
GET THE MESSAGE, GRAINE? LAY OFF THOSE ARTICLES OR WE'LL PAY YOU ONE FINAL FATAL VISIT!
SO BAGGOT DOESN'T LIKE THE PRES-SURE I PUT ON HIM! NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT HE DOES WHEN HE REALLY GETS SQUEEZED! HE STARTED THE VIOLENCE ... AND LEFT HIMSELF OPEN TO HAVING IT USED AGAINST HIM!
WHILE IN A ALLEY BEHIND THE JUSTICE BUILDING!
BE SMART, PURITY, WHO'S TO KNOW! THIS IS MORE MONEY THAN YOU WILL MAKE IN A YEAR AS D.A.'S ASSISTANT!
YOU...YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS?! WHY BAGGOTS A CROOK!...I CAN'T HELP HIM!
TAKE IT! IF YOU DON'T, SOMEONE ELSE WILL! EVEN IF BAGGOTS NAILED, SOMEONE ELSE WILL TAKE HIS PLACE SO GET IT WHILE YOU CAN! BESIDES, NO ONE WILL GET HURT!
WHY SHOULDN'T I GET MY SHARE... JUST THIS ONCE! ...EVERYONE ELSE DOES!


DON'T WORRY, PURITY, NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW ABOUT THIS DEAL!
...THERE'LL ALWAYS BE "BAGGOTS"...NO ONE WILL GET HURT AND I SWEAR TO GOD I'LL NEVER DO THIS AGAIN, A MAN'S ENTITLED TO ONE MISTAKE...NOBODY'S PERFECT!
THE *@!!??% D.A.'S MAN SOLD ME OUT! BAGGOT WILL KILL ME FOR FEEDING THE D.A. INFORMATION ON HIS OPERATIONS...WAIT...GRAINE, THE REPORTER, HE'S MY ONE CHANCE!
GRAINE, YOU MUST MEET ME, 9:00 AT WEBBS PIER. I GOT TO TELL YOU ABOUT BAGGOT AN'A LEAK IN THE D.A.'S OFFICE.. PLEASE COME...
...CLICK!
IT COULD BE THE REAL THING OR A TRAP FOR ME! WELL, I'LL HAVE TO GO AND FIND OUT!
BUT I'LL BE THERE AS EARLY AS I CAN, AND AS MR. A.!
IF THAT CALL WAS ON THE LEVEL, IT COULD BE THE ONE FINAL SQUEEZE I NEED TO CRUSH BAGGOT!
EVEN IF IT IS A TRAP, I COULD USE IT TO MY ADVANTAGE...
CLICK!
...IF INSTEAD OF BEING TRAPPED... I DO THE TRAPPING.
CLICK!
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER BAGGOT'S IN FOR AN EVE-NING HE'LL NEVER FORGET!
PAY OFF TIME, STOOLIE, YOU KNOW BAGGOT HATES THAT FREE SPEECH JAZZ. HE DECIDES WHO TALKS AND HE LIKES TO HAVE THE LAST WORD SO I'M PASSING IT ON TO YOU...I'LL LEAVE YOU SPEECHLESS!
BANG


I WISH THERE WERE MORE GUYS LIKE YOU, STOOLIE! IT'S TOUGH FOR SPECIALIST LIKE ME TO EARN BIG MONEY UNLESS HE'S KEPT WORKING AT HIS TRADE! I HOPE GRAINE PROVES TO BE AS COOPERATIVE AS YOU!
A SHORT TIME LATER...
AS EARLY AS I WAS... I'M STILL TOO LATE TO HELP HIM!
BY REMOVING THE OPPOSITION, BAGGOT THINKS HE'S DRAWING A NET OF PROTECTION AROUND HIMSELF BUT HE'LL FIND OUT IT WILL ACT AS A NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK!
IN PUBLIC, BAGGOT, AND WITH YOUR LAWYER, YET! YOU MADE SURE YOU HAVE A SOLID ALIBI!
SEE HERE, LT. BRASHER, WHAT'S HOMICIDE HARASSING MY CLIENT FOR? ARREST HIM OR STOP PESTERING HIM!
YOU'RE A CREDIT TO YOUR PROFESSION, RODEN. I'LL BE CHECKING ON YOU BAGGOT, OFTEN...
HA, HA! HE CAN'T PROVE A THING! HE'S JUST TRYING TO BUG ME SO I'M GOING TO LAY LOW FOR A WHILE... IT'LL ALL BLOW OVER!
I WISH YOU HADN'T USED ICER - YOU COULD OF HANDLED IT ANOTHER WAY!
I'LL FIX MY TROUBLES PERMANENTLY! REMEMBER THAT! GO TO YOUR OFFICE, I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH!
THEN, IN THE ALLEY OUTSIDE RODENS OFFICE.
WHERE'S YOUR MURDERING BOSS, RODEN?
WHA! MR. A! HE..HE LEFT TOWN ...I -I JUST SAW HIM OFF...HONEST!
STAY AWAY! ...IT'S THE TRUTH...I SWEAR IT! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT!...LEAVE ME ALONE.. PLEASE!
A DEAD END, RODEN! NOW YOU BEGIN TO PAY FOR JOINING AND HELPING BAGGOT CONTAMINATE THE CITY! SO START WITH THE TRUTH...WHERE'S BAGGOT?
I TOLD THE TRUTH! STAY BACK! I'LL SWEAR OUT A WARRANT.. I'LL HAVE YOU ARRESTED.. I'LL SMASH.. OOF!
YOU DELIBERATE VIOLATERS OF THE LAW LOSE ALL RIGHTS AND PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW... ANY CONSIDERATION YOU RECEIVE IS CHARITY! BUT DON'T EXPECT IT FROM ME. YOU CHOSE TO PROTECT THE EVIL..I CHOSE THE GOOD!

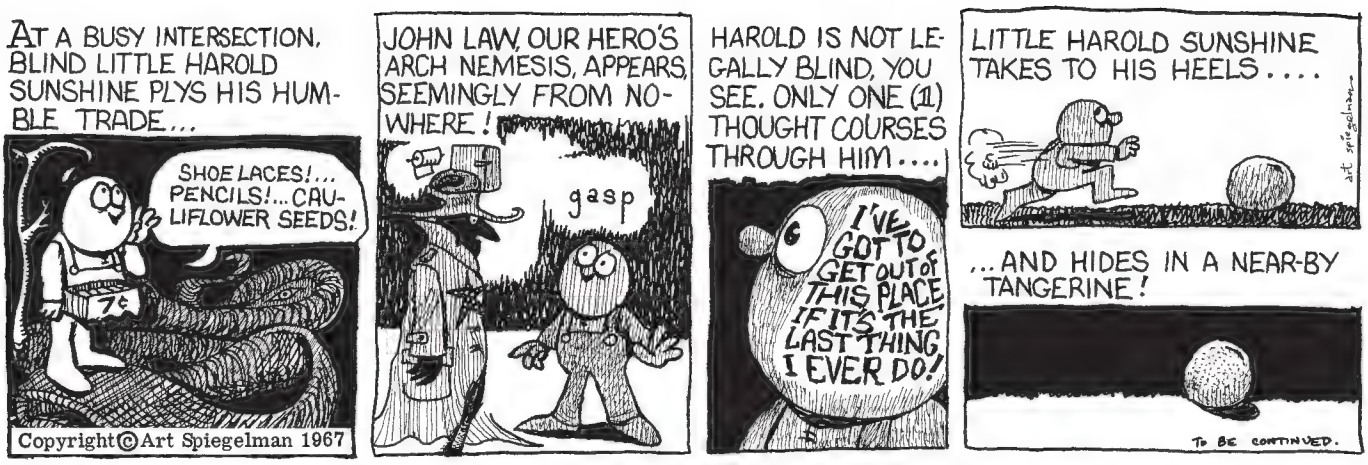

I TOLD.. AWK YOU.. GULPP.. AWK.. SPUTT..
AND WHO'S THE LEAK YOU BOUGHT IN THE DA.'S OFFICE? I WANT THE WHOLE STORY!
HOW.. DID.. YOU..AWKKK- I'LL...AWK.. TA..LK.. AKKKK
DON'T LIE OR LEAVE A SINGLE THING OUT!
YOU MAY HAVE A HARD TIME CONVINCING THE GARBAGE MEN YOU DON'T BELONG WHERE YOU ARE!
BUT MINUTES LATER...
WE GOT TO WARN BAGGOT! MR.A. IS ON HIS WAY TO GET HIM!
BAGGOTS PHONE IS OUT OF ORDER, THAT'S WHY I CAME TO SEE YOU!..WE CAN STILL GET THERE IN TIME! I'LL FIX MR.A. FOR GOOD. AND I'LL DO IT FOR NOTHING!
WHEN ICER GETS BACK, I WANT YOU TWO TO KEEP AN EYE ON THAT GUY GRAINE! IF HE DOESN'T PLAY BALL, LET HIM HAVE IT! MAKE IT LOOK ACCIDENTAL AND YOU GET A BONUS!
WE'LL FIX HIM!-THAT'S ICER NOW, I'LL LET HIM IN!
THE TIME HAS COME, BAGGOT!
WHA!.. WHO??
GET HIM!.. THAT'S MR.A.!
YOUR HIRED HAND ISN'T RELIABLE!
WAIT! LET'S TALK THIS OVER! I CAN MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE, FINANCIALLY, MR.A.! WE ALL GOT TO GIVE IN A LITTLE!
THEN YOU'LL SPILL TO THE D.A. ABOUT YOUR WHOLE ROTTEN OPERATION!
YOU'RE NOT FUNNY! I WAS BEING GENEROUS! NOW I'LL PAY YOU OFF LIKE EVERYONE ELSE WHO WON'T DO BUSINESS WITH ME!
YOUR SUDDEN COURAGE HAD TO COME FROM A SETUP LIKE THIS!
*%#!!?% WHY DIDN'T YOU KEEP STRINGING HIM ALONG...
BANG!


SMASH HIM! WE CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY ALIVE! OOFF!
YOU HAVE FIRST CRACK AT STOPPING ME, LOUD MOUTH!
HIT HIM WITH SOMETHING! GET HIM DOWN.. WATCH OUT...
STOP SHOUTING ORDERS AND START CLOBBERING HIM.. AGH..
I GOT- THAT BLASTED HEAD PIECE!
IT HELPS WHEN DEALING WITH CREATURES OF YOUR TYPE!
RODEN, BAGGOT, JUMP HIM! OOFF!
SHOW THEM HOW, KILLER!
GO ON YOU FOOL, PICK UP ICER'S GUN AND SHOOT A. PICK IT UP!
BUT.. LEW.. I.. I.. CAN'T.. I..
I PAY YOU TO DO WHAT I SAY! SHOOT HIM OR WE'RE ALL FINISHED!.. SHOOT ★!M★!!?#!
PLEASE.. I NEVER SHOT ANYONE... LEW, I.. I.. CAN'T.. OH GOD...
RODEN, YOU *?#@ SHOOT OR I'LL SEE YOU DEAD SHOOT!
NOW. RODEN!
OH, GOD, FORGIVE ME... IT'S NOT MY FAULT!
THE FINAL INSULT, ICER! YOU'VE NOT ONLY BEEN REPLACED BY AN AMATEUR KILLER, YOU'VE BECOME HIS FIRST VICTIM!
BANG! BANG! BANG!
NOW LET'S SEE LAWYER RODEN SAVE KILLER RODEN FROM THE CHAIR! TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THE RESULTS OF YOUR LATEST JOB FOR BAGGOT!


RODEN WILL TALK HIS HEAD OFF TO KEEP OUT OF THE CHAIR, THAT LEAVES IT EMPTY FOR YOU TO SIT IN, BAGGOT, AND YOU WILL!
NO, MR. A, PLEASE WAIT!
WE CAN STILL MAKE A DEAL. I GOT 100 GRAND HERE.. IT'S ALL YOURS! WE'LL MAKE RODEN A SUICIDE, I'LL CUT YOU IN ON THE RACKETS! 20 PERCENT YOU'LL MAKE A FORTUNE!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
30 PERCENT... 40 - 50 - 50 EQUAL PARTNERS! YOU CAN EVEN BE BOSS!
HA HA HA HA HA HA
PLEASE, ANYTHING YOU WANT, JUST NAME IT...IT'S YOURS- PLEASE!
HA! HA! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I WANT AND I WON'T SETTLE FOR LESS!
I WANT TO SEE YOU FINISHED FOR GOOD! YOU'RE A POISONOUS DISEASE, BAGGOT, TO ACCEPT ANY PART OF YOU IS TO ACCEPT CONTAMINATION THAT LEADS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF ALL DECENT VALUES. RODEN IS A PRIZE EXAMPLE! JUSTICE DEMANDS THAT YOU GET NO REWARDS OR CONSIDERATION FOR CHOOSING TO BE THE EVIL THING YOU ARE!
YOU'RE MAD! YOU CAN'T TURN DOWN THIS CHANCE TO MAKE BIG MONEY, TO HAVE POWER, TO CONTROL HALF THE CITY. FORGET THE NOBLE WORDS... ONLY DOUGH COUNTS!
IT'S HOW YOU MAKE AND USE IT! YOU'RE NOT OFFERING ME AN HONEST VALUE - YOU'RE OFFERING ME YOUR WAY OF LIFE! IT'S LIKE TRYING TO SELL A DISEASE TO A HEALTHY MAN!
I GOT TO REACH THAT GUN!
MY MONEY WILL STILL GET ME OUT OF THIS... IF I USE IT RIGHT!
THIS TIME YOU'RE GOING TO GET WHAT YOU'VE REALLY EARNED!

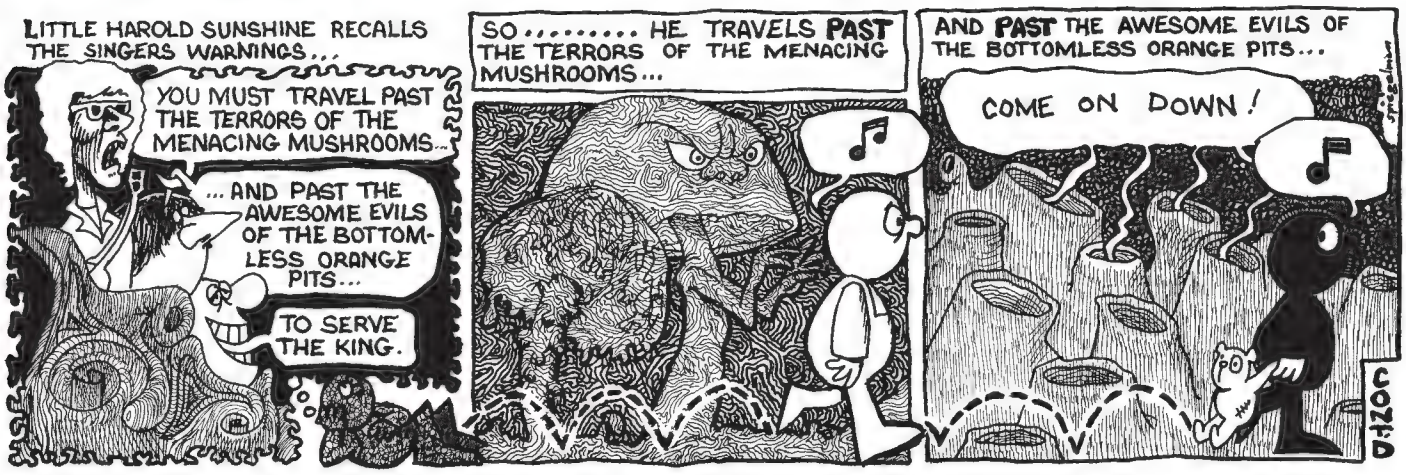

BAGGOT LUNGES FOR THE GUN BUT HIS FEET SLIP ON THE CRISP BILLS SPILLED ON THE RUG...
YOUR FOUL DEEDS WILL BE ADDED UP AND YOU'LL PAY FOR THEM, NOT WITH STOLEN MONEY--BUT WITH YOUR LIFE!
IT WILL BE THE FIRST HONEST TRADE YOU EVER MADE!
LATER, IN THE D.A.S OFFICE..
BLAST IT, HOW DID BAGGOT KNOW WE HAD AN INFORMER!
WE DON'T KNOW HE DID! IT COULD OF BEEN A GRUDGE KILLING!
I DON'T BUY IT! BAGGOTS CHANGED HIS SETUP. NOW WE GOT TO START FROM SCRATCH! GET BUSY!
HE SUSPECTS A LEAK BUT HE CAN'T PROVE IT!
HE HAD ME TERRIFIED FOR A SECOND BUT NOW I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! NOBODY CAN PROVE I MADE THAT DEAL--AND FOR A NICE BANKROLL!
BESIDES, ONE LITTLE MISTAKE DOESN'T MAKE ME BAD! I'D NEVER DO IT AGAIN! I'M STILL A DECENT GUY.. IT'S NOT MY FAULT THEY KILL-WHA
COME IN TRAITOR!
THAT CARD! MR. A! NO! I-I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG!
YOU ROTTEN LIAR! YOU CAUSED A MAN TO BE MURDERED, PURITY, YOU SABOTAGED THE LAW--YOU SOLD OUT!


THE POLICE ARE PICKING UP BAGGOT AND HIS BUNCH! I'M HERE TO MAKE SURE YOU PAY FOR WHAT YOU DID! RODEN MARKED THE MONEY HE GAVE YOU-- WHERE IS IT?
NO! NO, HE LIED! YOU CAN'T BELIEVE A CROOKED LAWYER! I SWEAR I'M INNOCENT!
I CAN MAKE YOU TALK LIKE I MADE RODEN AND YOU WILL TALK, PURITY! HOW DO YOU WANT IT?
I-I HID THE MONEY, IN MY APARTMENT! I-I'M NOT A REAL CRIMINAL! PLEASE, GIVE ME A BREAK!
YOU CAN CONFESS TO THE D.A. ON YOUR OWN OR I'LL DRAG YOU IN.. THAT'S IS THE ONLY BREAK YOU'LL GET OR DESERVE!
NO, PLEASE! I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE MONEY! I DESERVE ANOTHER CHANCE! I'M SORRY- I SWEAR TO GOD I AM! I'LL NEVER DO IT AGAIN! IT-IT'LL JUST BE RODEN'S WORD AGAINST MINE! PLEASE-- HAVE PITY ON ME!
YOU SCUM, YOU BETRAYED THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE! YOU SOLD OUT TO EVERYONE WHO LOOKS TO TO THE LAW AS THE PROTECTOR OF THE INNOCENT. AND WHY DID YOU DO IT? NO ONE PRESSURED YOU, NO ONE THREATEN YOU, NO ONE USED FORCE TO MAKE YOU! IN A BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL WHERE THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE YOU WILLINGLY CHOSE TO BE EVILS SECRET ALLY! YOU WANTED THE ADVANTAGES OF BOTH SIDES. MONEY YOU HAVEN'T EARNED.. RESPECT YOU'RE NOT ENTITLED TO!
BUT I'M SORRY! SOB!
YOUR SELF IMPOSED BLINDNESS IS OVER! YOU'RE GOING TO FACE UP TO PAY FOR YOUR SELLOUT! GO TURN YOURSELF IN!
OH PLEASE! HAVE PITY! I-I DON'T WANT TO GO TO JAIL! I DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM...I WON'T DO IT AGAIN..SOB!
NO, MAX, THAT'S FINAL! YOU CAN'T EXPECT THE PUBLIC TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT LAW AND ORDER EVERYDAY! WE'LL DO A COMICAL CRUSADE ON LITTERBUGS AND PUT GRAINE ON SOMETHING UNCONTROVERSIAL!
BUT, MR. HENRY, WE GOT BAGGOT ON THE RUN..TO LET UP NOW...
YOU WANT ME TO BREAK IN ON THEIR CONFERENCE?! OKAY REX, IT'S YOUR HEAD!
DAILY
CRUSADER
THE END-


AT A BUSY INTERSECTION, BLIND LITTLE HAROLD SUNSHINE PLYS HIS HUMBLE TRADE...
SHOE LACES!... PENCILS!... CAULIFLOWER SEEDS!
7¢
Copyright©Art Spiegelman 1967
JOHN LAW, OUR HERO'S ARCH NEMESIS, APPEARS, SEEMINGLY FROM NOWHERE!
gasp
HAROLD IS NOT LEGALLY BLIND, YOU SEE. ONLY ONE (1) THOUGHT COURSES THROUGH HIM....
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS PLACE IF IT'S THE LAST THING I EVER DO!
LITTLE HAROLD SUNSHINE TAKES TO HIS HEELS....
art spiegelman
...AND HIDES IN A NEAR-BY TANGERINE!
TO BE CONTINUED.


SYNOPSIS: LAST TIME, AS YOU MAY REMEMBER, NOTHING HAPPENED. NOTHING EVER DOES.
BLIND LITTLE HAROLD SUNSHINE WANDERS INSIDE THE TANGERINE.
THE "ORANGE-YOU-GLAD-I-DIDN'T-SAY-BANANAS" SINGERS LOOM IN HIS PATH...
HEY MR TANGERINE MAN...
WE ALL LIVED IN A YELLOW TANGERINE...
CAMPTOWN LADIES SING THIS SONG DOO-DA... DOO-DA!
art spiegelman
UH - WOULD YOU BUY SOME CAULIFLOWER SEEDS, GOOD SIRS?
LORDY, WHAT A STRANGE COMIC STRIP!
7¢
CONT'D


THE SINGERS SPEAK:
YOU MUST TRAVEL PAST THE TERRORS OF THE MENACING MUSHROOMS...
...AND PAST THE AWESOME EVILS OF THE BOTTOMLESS ORANGE PITS...
...TO SERVE THE KING!
NOW, A-GO-GO ON YOUR WAY!
B-BUT WHY?
art spiegelman
WELL...
...IT'S SOMETHING TO DO!
CONT'D


LITTLE HAROLD SUNSHINE RECALLS THE SINGERS WARNINGS...
YOU MUST TRAVEL PAST THE TERRORS OF THE MENACING MUSHROOMS...
...AND PAST THE AWESOME EVILS OF THE BOTTOMLESS ORANGE PITS...
TO SERVE THE KING.
SO..... HE TRAVELS PAST THE TERRORS OF THE MENACING MUSHROOMS...
AND PAST THE AWESOME EVILS OF THE BOTTOMLESS ORANGE PITS...
COME ON DOWN!
spiegelman
DOZO

a very strange comic strip

Synopsis — Blind Little Harold Sunshine is hiding in a tangerine. He intends to serve the king.



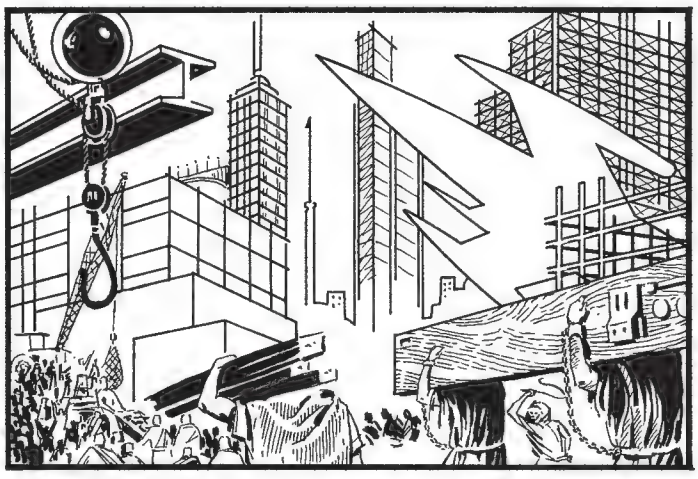






YES-PLAY WITH YOUR CELLS, AND BECOME YOUR OWN FOOD!

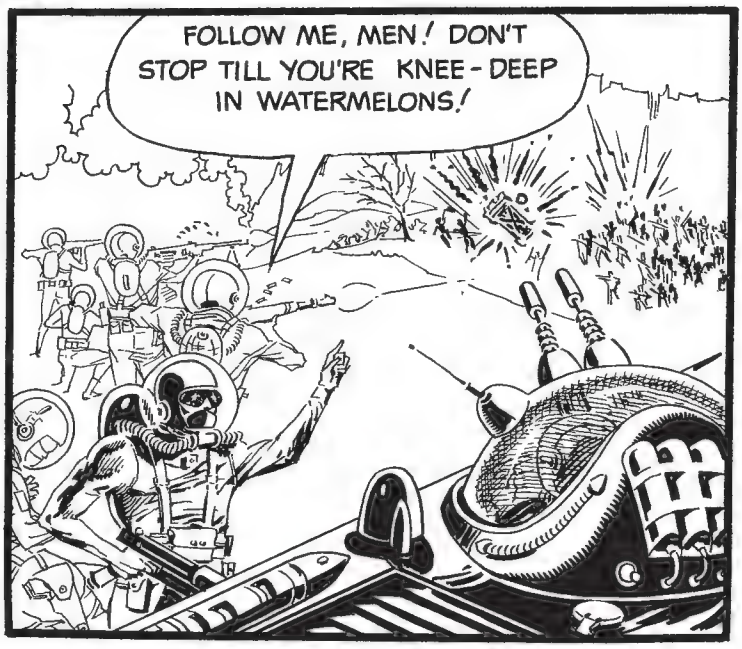

EPILOGUE: I SUPPOSE BY THIS TIME I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO SENSITIVE WHEN THEY LAUGHED AT MY FUNNY EARS...


BUT I COULDN'T FORGET THE BOTCHED UP JOB THOSE WINO CARPENTERS HAD MADE OF OUR TREE-HOUSE, AND OF THE EFFORT IT HAD TAKEN TO UNDO THE DAMAGE...

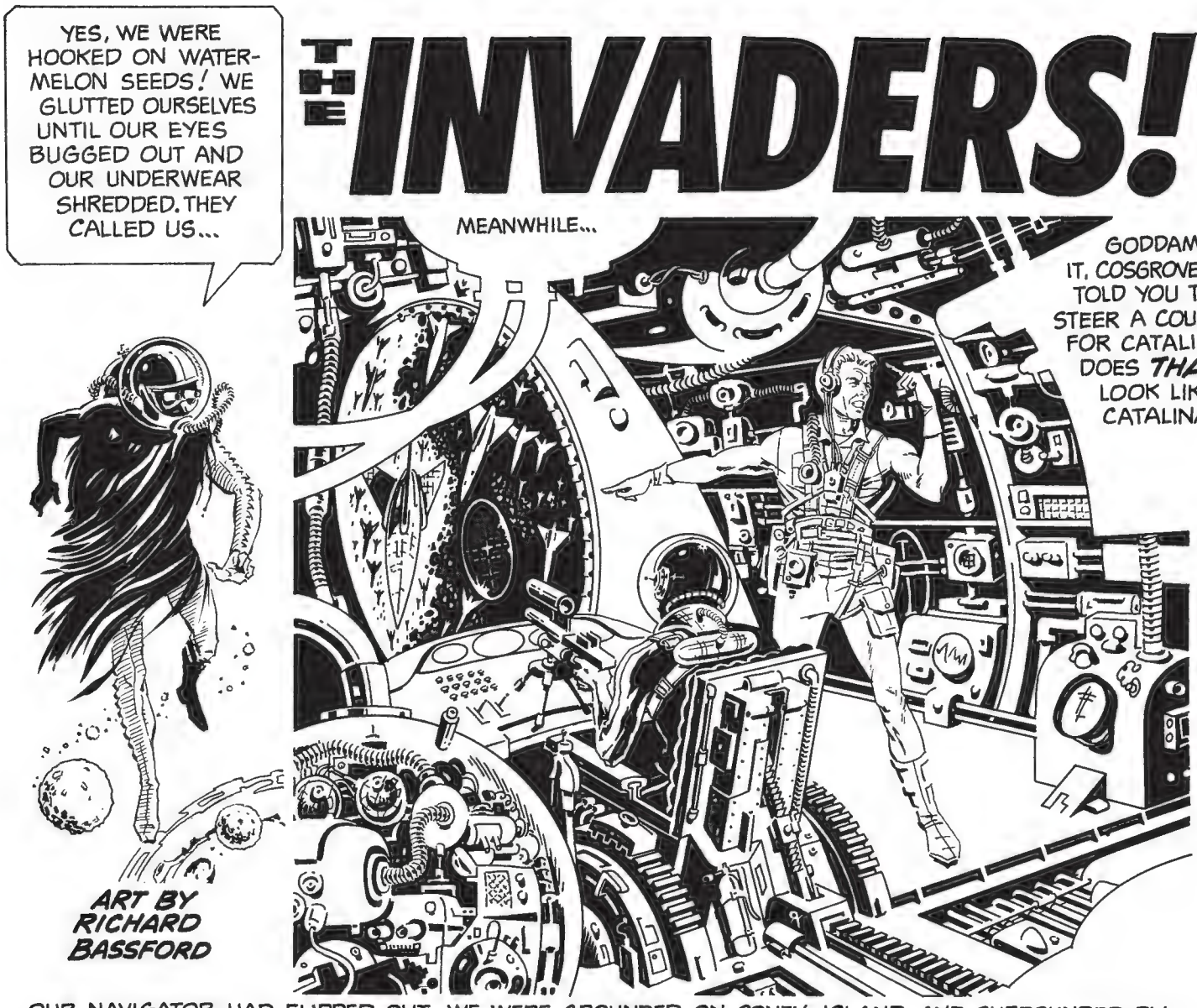

AND I KEPT REMEMBERING THE WAY IT HAD BEEN THAT SUMMER... MONTHS OF LAUGHTER AND GAMES, TRAPPING SQUIRRELS.


WHO CAN FORGET THAT POIGNANT MESSAGE AS IT WAS BROADCAST THROUGHOUT THE BEACH AREA: "WOULD MRS. GINSBERG OF 313 TONAWANDA AVENUE, SAG HARBOR, PLEASE REPORT TO AREA 3 ON THE BOARDWALK TO PICK UP HER MOTHER?"


THE BARBED WIRE WAS MURDER, BUT WE COULDN'T RESIST THE DELICATE AROMA OF FRESH WATERMELON!


FOLLOW ME, MEN! DON'T STOP TILL YOU'RE KNEE-DEEP IN WATERMELONS!

THE INVADERS!

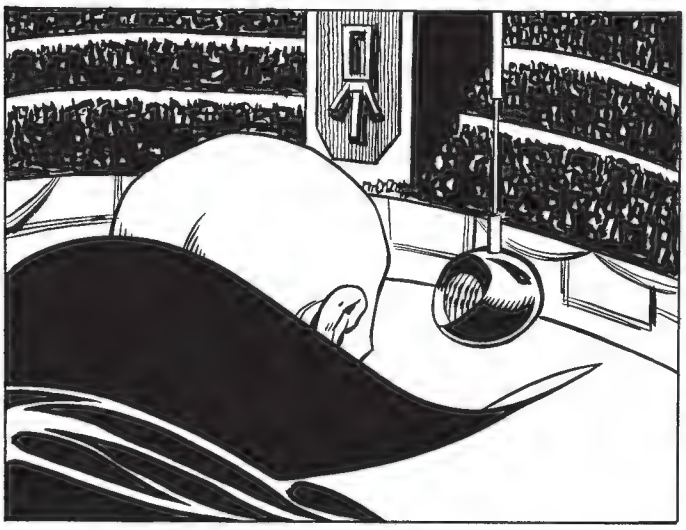


OUR NAVIGATOR HAD FLIPPED OUT. WE WERE GROUNDED ON CONEY ISLAND, AND SURROUNDED BY HOSTILE BATHERS! IT WAS PAINFULLY OBVIOUS THERE WEREN'T ANY WATERMELONS WITHIN MILES. IRONICALLY, THERE ARE NO WATERMELONS ON CATALINA, EITHER. THERE AREN'T EVEN ANY CANTALOUPES ON CATALINA.



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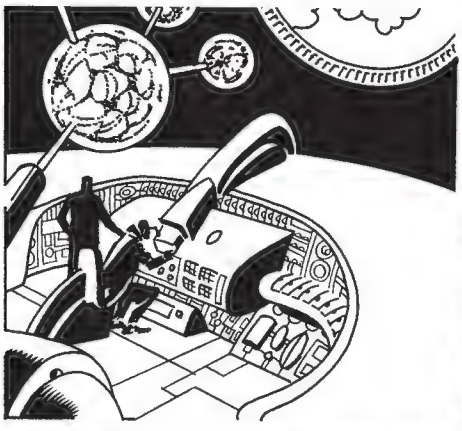
MEANWHILE, THE MAYOR OF SAG HARBOR CALLED A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL: "FIRST OF ALL, IT'S BEEN DEFINITELY ESTABLISHED THAT BALDNESS IS A SIGN OF VIRILITY!"



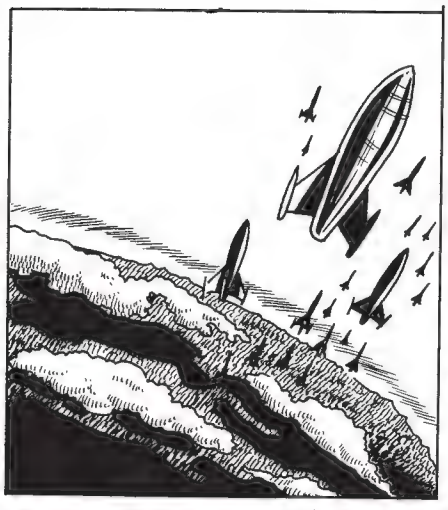
BUT HIS SPEECH CAME TOO LATE--ONCE GENTLE CITIZENS WERE STORMING THE WATERMELON CANNERY!



THE CAPTAIN'S HOARSE WHISPER SENT A CHILL OF TERROR UP THE NAVIGATOR'S SPINE..."HURRY, COSGROVE, HURRY! I KEEP IMAGINING IMMENSE WATERMELON SEEDS HANGING OVER OUR HEADS!"



WITH A MIGHTY THRUST OF POWER, THE SPACESHIPS DRAW AWAY FROM THE BADLY DRAWN EARTH...



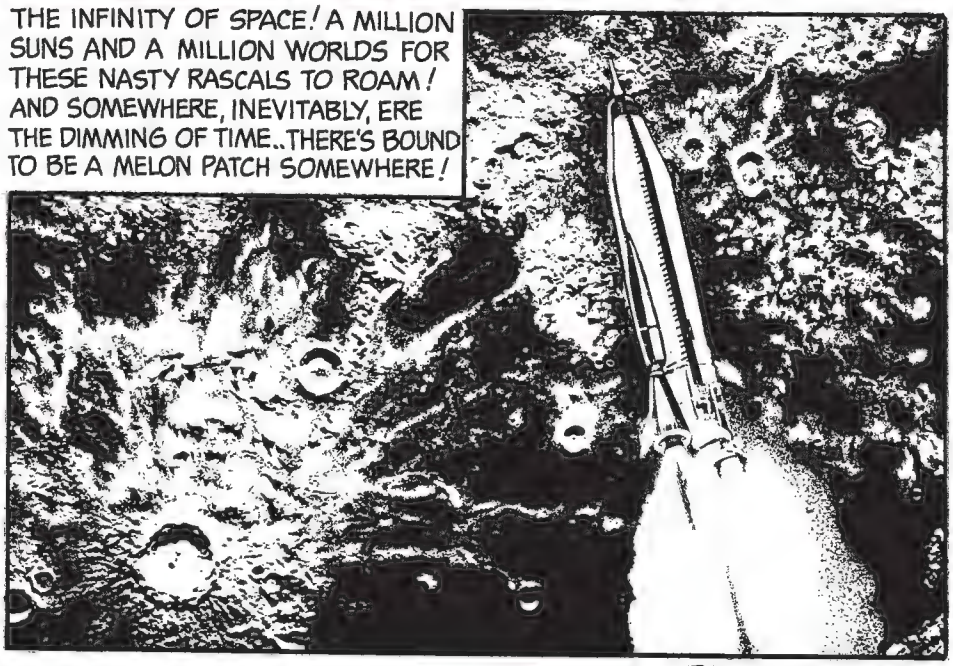
INSIDE, AMONG THE CLUTTER OF KNOBS, SPROCKETS, AND THE MOUNTED HEAD OF HIS NAVIGATOR...



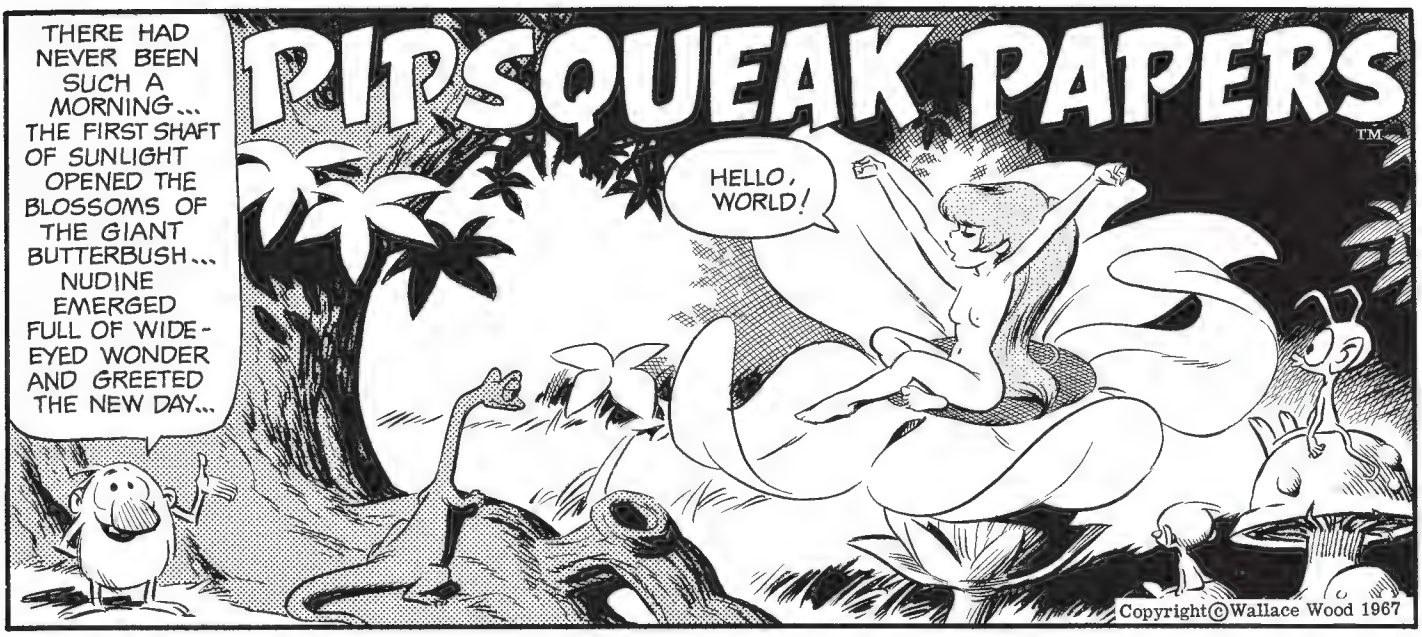
HEH, HEH! YES, DEAR READER, YOU SEE, THOSE TERRIBLE, SMOOTH-SKINNED ALIENS WERE ACTUALLY THE ORIGINAL EARTH SPECIES. WE DEFEATED THEM BACK IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.



THE INFINITY OF SPACE! A MILLION SUNS AND A MILLION WORLDS FOR THESE NASTY RASCALS TO ROAM! AND SOMEWHERE, INEVITABLY, ERE THE DIMMING OF TIME..THERE'S BOUND TO BE A MELON PATCH SOMEWHERE!



TO BE CONTINUED

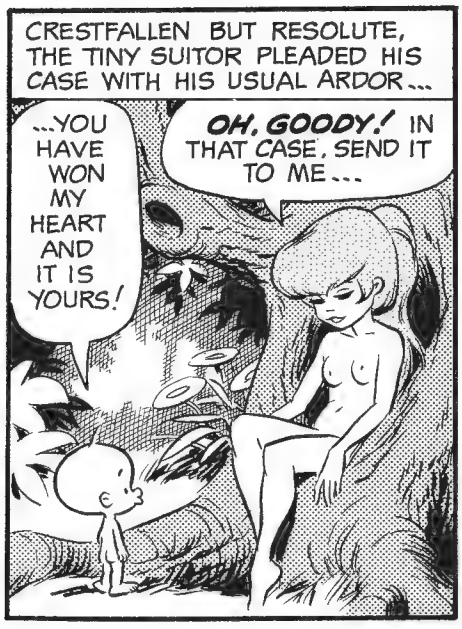

PIPSQUEAK PAPERS™
THERE HAD NEVER BEEN SUCH A MORNING... THE FIRST SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT OPENED THE BLOSSOMS OF THE GIANT BUTTERBUSH... NUDINE EMERGED FULL OF WIDE-EYED WONDER AND GREETED THE NEW DAY...
HELLO, WORLD!
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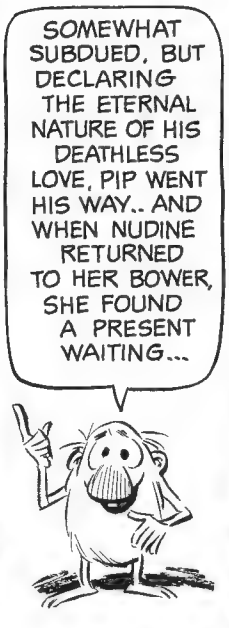

COMING UPON A HUMANOID FIGURE, SHE ASKED HER ETERNAL QUESTION...
ARE YOU A MAN?


SHE RECEIVED NO REPLY, AND THEREFORE FELL IN LOVE AT ONCE.. BUT DETERMINED TO RESUME HER QUEST, WHEN...
I'M A MAN AND I LOVE YOU


IT WAS PIP, WHO PERIODICALLY APPEARED TO PROFESS HIS UNDYING DEVOTION...
I LOVE YOU TOO, PIP... BUT YOU'RE JUST A BABY MAN!


...AND THERE ARE CERTAIN PROBLEMS...
LIKE WHAT?
LIKE HOW WOULD WE EVER CONSUMMATE THE THING?
OH!


CRESTFALLEN BUT RESOLUTE, THE TINY SUITOR PLEADED HIS CASE WITH HIS USUAL ARDOR...
...YOU HAVE WON MY HEART AND IT IS YOURS!
OH, GOODY! IN THAT CASE, SEND IT TO ME...


SOMEWHAT SUBDUED, BUT DECLARING THE ETERNAL NATURE OF HIS DEATHLESS LOVE, PIP WENT HIS WAY.. AND WHEN NUDINE RETURNED TO HER BOWER, SHE FOUND A PRESENT WAITING...


OPENING THE PACKAGE EAGERLY, SHE EXTRACTED ITS CONTENTS WITH A GLAD LITTLE CRY...
OH! A HEART! OH! FOR ME!


...AND TOOK IT, AND LOVINGLY PREPARED IT AND COOKED IT...
...AND ATE IT.


THEN, AS SHE DAINTILY LICKED HER FINGERS, HER EYES MET THOSE OF A CREATURE NAMED LLEWD, WHO HAD BEEN FURTIVELY WATCHING...
OH!
...AND, ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY SHE ASKED...
... ARE YOU A MAN?
WHERE UPON HE INSTANTLY REPLIED..
YES!
...BUT HE WAS LYING, OF COURSE, FOR HE WAS A MUTANDROID, A SPECIES OF REMARKABLY LOW INTELLIGENCE AND LACKING IN THE ESSENTIAL HUMAN VIRTUES...
GIVEN TO BASE PASSIONS, HE IMMEDIATELY THRUST HER INTO A LEAFY BOWER AND, DESPITE HER PROTESTATIONS, PROCEEDED TO KISS HER VIOLENTLY...
OH!
NO!
STOP!
NO!
PLEASE...
... JUST AS PIP CAME UPON THE SCENE..
!
UNHAND THAT WOMAN, SIR!
UNHAND HER, I SAY!
HAVE AT YOU, LECHER!
YOU'LL LIVE TO REGRET THIS, YOU BASTARD!
HAW
TREMBLING WITH BAFFLED RAGE, THE TINY HERO STUMBLED OFF, ATTEMPTING TO SHUT OUT THE PITIFUL CRIES OF HIS LOVE...
OH!
NO!
STOP!
OH!
PLEASE!
NO!
OH!
...UNTIL, BLINDED BY TEARS, HE COLLIDED WITH A SOLID OBJECT...
BUMP
HMM.. IT APPEARS TO BE AN UNINHABITED HUMANOID..
SIZING UP THE SITUATION AT A GLANCE, PIP DECIDED TO TAKE POSESSION OF THE BODY AT ONCE, LEST IT FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS...
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, SMUG THE SCIENTIST APPEARED WITH A BRAND-NEW BRAIN...
YOU NASTY PIPSQUEAK! GET OUT OF MY BODY AT ONCE!
IGNORING SMUG'S THREATS, PIP SLAMMED THE LID, AND A STARTLING TRANSFORMATION OCCURRED..
COME OUT, I SAY!
SLAM
AS HE TOOK CONTROL, THE HUMANOID BODY ASSUMED HIS PIPSQUEAK PERSONALITY!
COME OUT, OR..
POOP ON YOU, OLD MAN!
IGNORING THE ANGUISHED CRIES OF THE SCIENTIST, HE GUIDED HIS NEW-FOUND BODY BACK TO THE BOWER...
STOP OR I'LL BLAST YOU WITH A BOLT OF PURE ELEMENTAL FORCE!
YOU'RE JOKING OF COURSE...YOU WOULDN'T HARM YOUR OWN CREATION!
NO!
STOP
OH!
OOH!
NO!
...WHERE HIS LOVE STILL STRUGGLED VAINLY FOR HER VIRTUE..

...THEN, LAYING HANDS UPON THE UNSUSPECTING LLEWD, BELABORED HIM IN A MANNER TOO HORRIBLE FOR WORDS...



..AS THEY PONDERED THE QUESTION, THE FALLEN LLEWD RECOVERED HIS SENSES SOMEWHAT...



..AND DISCREETLY REMOVED HIMSELF TO SAFER GROUND..

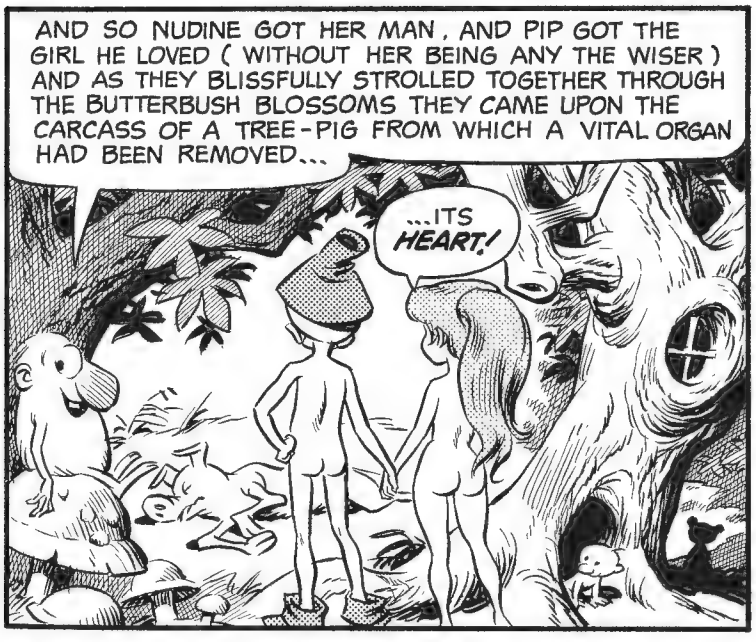


...AND THEN NUDINE REALLY LOOKED AT HER RESCUER FOR THE FIRST TIME AND REALIZED THAT SHE HAD BEEN IN LOVE WITH HIM EVER SINCE THEIR FIRST MEETING..





AND SO NUDINE GOT HER MAN, AND PIP GOT THE GIRL HE LOVED (WITHOUT HER BEING ANY THE WISER) AND AS THEY BLISSFULLY STROLLED TOGETHER THROUGH THE BUTTERBUSH BLOSSOMS THEY CAME UPON THE CARCASS OF A TREE-PIG FROM WHICH A VITAL ORGAN HAD BEEN REMOVED...



THEN THE REALIZATION CAME...



OR, AS PIP WOULD PUT IT...



PIPSQUEAK PAPERS™




THE ONE TRULY REMARKABLE THING ABOUT NUDINE WAS THAT, NO MATTER HOW TERRIBLE OR DEGRADING THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DAY BEFORE, SHE WOKE EACH MORNING WITH HER VIRTUE MIRACULOUSLY RESTORED....
OH, MY GOODNESS!
HOW IS IT?
I BEG YOUR PARDON.. HOW IS WHAT?
YOUR GOOD-NESS, BABY... HOW IS IT?
AT A LOSS FOR A REPLY TO THE STRANGE CREATURE'S OVERTURE, NUDINE COUNTERED WITH A CHARACTER-ISTIC QUERY...
ARE YOU A MAN?
SURE AM, HONEY.. AND WHAT ARE YOU?
I'M A NYMPH!
A NYMPH? OH!
NO, JUST A NYMPH!
TIRING OF THIS REPARTEE, HE DECIDED TO DISPENSE WITH THE FORMALITIES AND PRO-CEEDED TO ABDUCT HER ON THE SPOT...
OH, SIR! NO! STOP! DON'T! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF, SIR?
OH, IF ONLY I WEREN'T JUST A DEFENSELESS LITTLE FEMALE...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND..
STOP!
OH, HONEY! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE HERE! HE TRIED TO ABDUCT ME! SMASH HIS FACE IN! RIP OUT HIS GUTS! KICK HIM IN...
PREPARE TO DEFEND YOURSELF, FELLOW!
IT IS ONLY FITTING NOW THAT WE DRAW A DISCREET CURTAIN OVER THE SCENE OF SICKENING BRUTALITY THAT ENSUED...
..AND LOOK IN UPON SMUG THE SCIENTIST, WHO HAD LONG BROODED OVER THE THEFT OF HIS HAND-MADE HUMANOID.
THAT DAMNED PIP-SQUEAK!
THERE IS JUST ONE COURSE OPEN TO ME...
MUCH AS I DISLIKE VIOLENCE, I MUST CALL THE COLLECTOR!


UPON HEARING THIS DRASTIC DECISION, SMUG'S INSECTOID ASSISTANT "FLITTER" WAS AGHAST..
I'M AGHAST! NOT HIM! NOT THE COLLECTOR!
YES! AND NONE OF YOUR BLEEDING HEART NONSENSE. GO SUM-MON HIM AT ONCE!
RELUCTANTLY, THE FAITHFUL FLITTER COMPLIED, AND SOON..
WHO CALLS THE COLLECTOR?
I.. I DO, YOUR AWESOME FRIGHTFUL-NESS!
... AND YOU WILL FIND THIS DISHONEST PIPSQUEAK, AND COL-LECT ONE ADULT HUMA-NOID BODY, OR ...WELL, I'LL LEAVE THE CON-SEQUENCES TO YOU..
AND SO, WITH ADMIRABLE SINGLE-MINDED-NESS, THE COLLECTOR SET OFF ON HIS ERRAND, DETER-MINED TO LET NOTHING STAND IN HIS WAY..
AS, MEANWHILE PIP ALLOWED HIS BEATEN OPPONENT TO ESCAPE (BARELY) WITH HIS LIFE..
AND NOW...?
...AND TURNED TO NUDINE, ONLY TO FIND SHE WAS NO LONGER IN EVIDENCE...
HEARING FAINT SOUNDS OF STRUGGLE, PIP FOLLOWED THEM TO A NEARBY BUTTERBUSH BRAMBLE, WHERE HE FOUND HIS LOVE AGAIN VAINLY ATTEMPTING TO DEFEND HER VIRTUE...
NO! HELP! DON'T! STOP! NO! PLEASE! HELP! DON'T! WOW! STOP!
NUDINE! WHAT THE HELL-??
NUDINE, I'M GETTING ARM WEARY AND FOOT-SORE DEFENDING YOU!
HOW COME YOU'RE ALWAYS BEING MOLESTED?
WELL, GEE... WHAT CAN I DO? I'M JUST A HELPLESS..
IN THE PROCESS OF PUTTING THE FOUL FELLOW TO FLIGHT, A MISHAP OCCURRED..
MY CAP!
PIP! YOU! OH! YOU'VE DECEIVED ME AGAIN!
NUDINE PRETENDED TO BE VEXED... SECRETLY, HOWEVER, SHE WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED TO KNOW THAT INSIDE THE BODY SHE LOVED WAS A BABY MAN WHO LOVED HER...
...AND, BEING NUDINE, SHE AUTOMATICALLY MADE THE MOST OF THE SITUATION...
I'M HUNGRY!
NO, NOT THAT! YOU DON'T LOVE ME ANY MORE!
I'M SICK OF FRUIT!
I WANT MEAT!
...RED MEAT!
PIP, BEING PIP AND DESPERATE-LY IN LOVE, STROVE EVER HARDER TO PLEASE...
I'M COLD!
NO! NOT THAT OLD FUR!
I WANT A GRIZZLY CAT RUG!
YOU DON'T LOVE ME ANY MORE!
UNTIL ONE DAY HE UNVEILED HIS SUPREME TRIBUTE..
OH! FOR ME? ...WHAT IS IT?
IT'S A PEDES-TAL!
NOT QUITE COMPRE-HENDING THE HONOR, (BUT INTENSELY PLEASED ALL THE SAME) NUDINE TOOK HER SEAT..
..ER.... NOW WHAT?
YOU JUST SIT THERE AND LET ME IDOLIZE YOU!

..AND PIP WENT OFF IN SEARCH OF FOOD. NUDINE, DELIGHTED WITH HER NEW STATION, SAT...



..AND SAT...AND BEGAN TO WONDER..



... AND THEN.



MEANWHILE PIP, RESPONDING TO A CALL OF NATURE, VACATED THE HUMANOID BODY...



BUT MADE THE MISTAKE OF LEAVING THE HEAD OPEN...



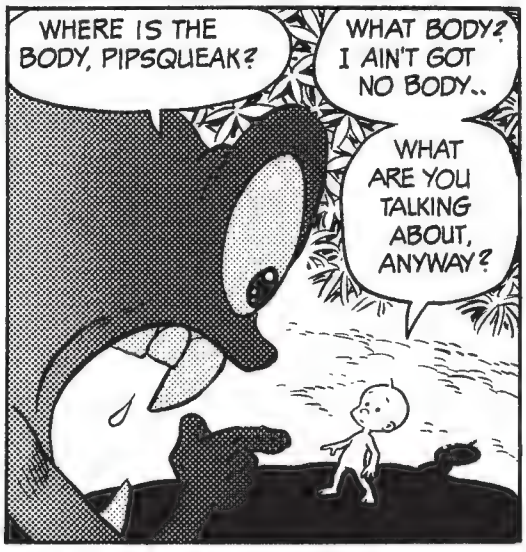
DOMINATED BY THE BIRD'S BRAIN, THE BODY WANDERED OFF, AND WHEN PIP RETURNED..



RUSHING TO THE PEDESTAL TO TELL NUDINE THE AWFUL NEWS, HE FOUND...



AND AS IF DIRECTED BY SOME EVIL FATE, THE COLLECTOR CHOSE THAT VERY MOMENT TO MAKE HIS APPEARANCE...

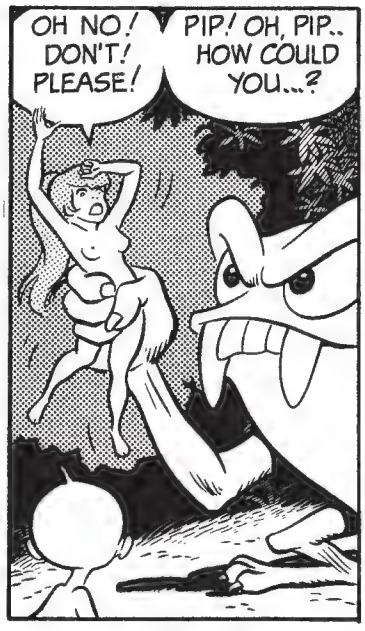


ACCORDING TO SMUG, YOU HAVE ONE ADULT HUMANOID BODY, WHICH RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO HIM!



AT THAT MOMENT, NUDINE RETURNED, AND IN A FLASH THE ALERT MIND OF PIP SAW THE SOLUTION TO HIS DILEMMA ...







LONG AFTER HER CRIES HAD CEASED TO ECHO, PIP STOOD STARING AT NOTHING, AS THE SHADOWS GREW LONG...



LANE TRALLIS IS ALMOST AN ANIMAL NOW. IT WAS AN EVOLUTION, NOT A SUDDEN THING. HE EATS WITH HIS HANDS, WASHES RARELY, WEARS A LOINCLOTH ONLY TO PROTECT HIS GROIN AND AS A BELT IN WHICH TO HOLSTER HIS KNIFE. HIS WOMAN HE STOLE LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT, WHEN SHE WAS A SCRAWNY CHILD OF NINE, WHILE HER PARENTS PROBABLY DREAMED SWEET DREAMS OF ROASTING THE GIRL FOR A MIDDAY FEAST. ALL OF THIS LANE GENTLY EXPLAINED IN DETAIL AS HE RAPED HER REPEATEDLY IN REPLY TO HER TEARS. NOW SHE SHARES HIS FATE WITH FAITHFUL PASSIVITY, AS HE ***CHALLENGES*** FATE TO TAKE THE...

LAST CHANCE!







FROM THE SAFER HILLS THEY'VE COME ON A DESPERATE MISSION... FOR A LEGEND WAS BORN TO EASE THE DESPAIR OF THE FEW LIKE THESE WHO REMAIN. SELDOM WHISPERED, FOR PERSONAL MEETINGS ARE RARE--YET SCRATCHED IN THE WOOD, IN THE DUST WHERE IT MIGHT BE SEEN: *"IN THE HALL OF THE ETERNAL SPIRIT, WAITS THE HUMAN SALVATION!"*





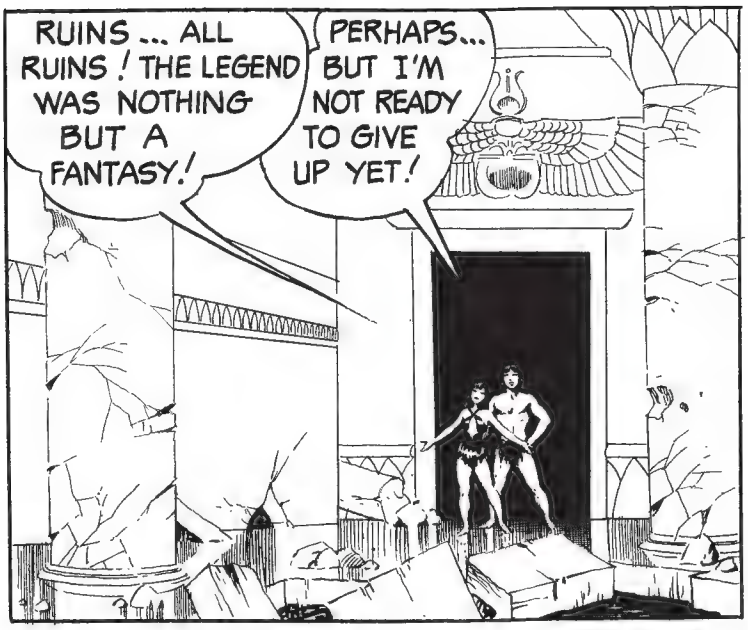



YOU SEE -- WE'VE LOST THEM! BUT WE'D BETTER NOT RACE THROUGH THIS SLUM!..
I'M TERRIFIED, LANE.. WHAT'S THAT SMELL?!
PRETTY ROTTEN, ISN'T IT? I'D GUESS IT'S THE REMAINS OF A LOT OF THINGS...
LIKE GARBAGE... AND ANIMALS!
DO YOU WANT TO JOIN THEM? ..LET'S GET OUT WHILE WE STILL HAVE A CHANCE!
JUST LIKE A WOMAN! OBSTINATE, SHORT-SIGHTED! IF THE LEGEND IS TRUE, WE MAY FIND A COLONY OF CIVILIZED PEOPLE!...
THIS USED TO BE THE LIBRARY. WE'RE ONLY A BLOCK FROM THE SCIENCE HALL!
I'VE GOT A FEELING, LANE.. WE'LL NEVER LEAVE HERE ALIVE!
INTUITION YET! I TELL YOU WE'VE NOTHING TO FEAR EXCEPT SLOW DEATH FROM HUNGER!


AND IF YOU MUST KNOW, I'M FED TO THE EARS WITH YOUR WHINING!
I'M SORRY, LANE...YOU LEAD THE WAY.
OKAY, LET'S GET TO THA-
LANE! THOSE RODENTS! THEY'RE AS BIG AS DOGS!
MORE OF THEM IN EVERY DIRECTION! NOW WE ARE SURROUNDED!
THERE'S A DOOR JUST AHEAD!
HURRY, LANE! THEY'RE CLOSING IN!
IT'S NO USE-- THERE ARE HUNDREDS! AND THERE'S NO-WHERE LEFT TO RUN!
STAY BEHIND ME! IF WE CAN JUST GET THROUGH THAT DOOR!


WE CAN'T GIVE UP NOW, MARI!...
THIS IS THE SCIENCE HALL!
QUICK! GET INSIDE!
CLOSE THE DOOR- I'LL HANDLE JUNIOR!
UGH! THEY'RE SLIMY BEASTS, BUT THEIR NECKS ARE WEAK!
THAT'S IT, BABY! NOW WE'RE SNUG AS CAN BE!


WHAT DO YOU THINK? A NICE CAPE?
WE'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER EXIT, THAT'S FOR SURE. BUT NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND
I ONLY SEE ONE DIRECTION TO TAKE.. THROUGH THAT DOOR!
STAY LOOSE, MARI... NOW I'M ON EDGE!
CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING!
LET'S GO SLOW... AT LEAST IT'S QUIET HERE. AND THE STINK ISN'T AS BAD AS IT IS OUTSIDE!...
THIS IS IT, ALRIGHT! THEY WERE GOING TO PUT EVERY MARVEL OF SCIENCE HERE!
IT LOOKS PRETTY EMPTY TO ME... BUT THERE'S ANOTHER DOORWAY!
THERE MUST BE A CLUE TO THE LEGEND SOMEWHERE.. IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL!

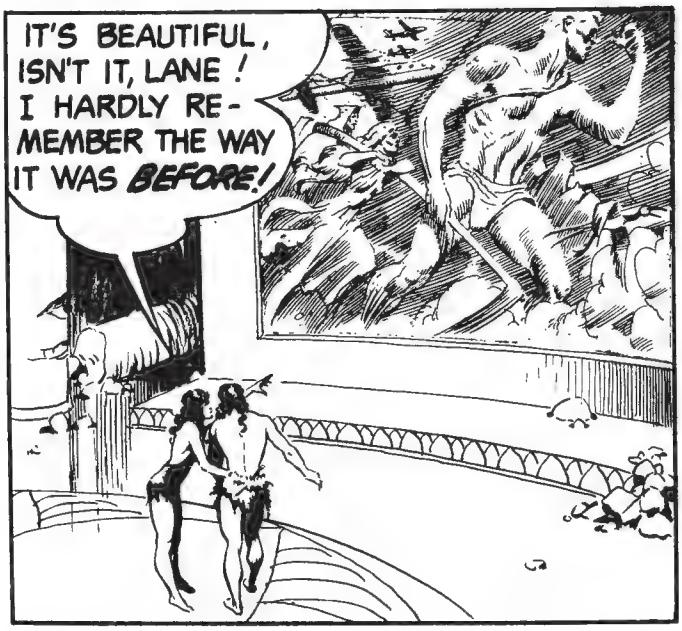






THERE WASN'T MUCH LEFT *EXCEPT* FEAR AFTER THE FIRST BARRAGE OF BOMBS LEVELED THE MAJOR CITIES. WHAT REMAINED HAS BE- COME A SEWER OF PESTI - LENCE FOR THE RAGGED SURVIVORS. SOON THEY WILL WITHER LIKE UPROOT- ED FLOWERS ON A GUTTED BATTLEFIELD, *UNLESS.....*



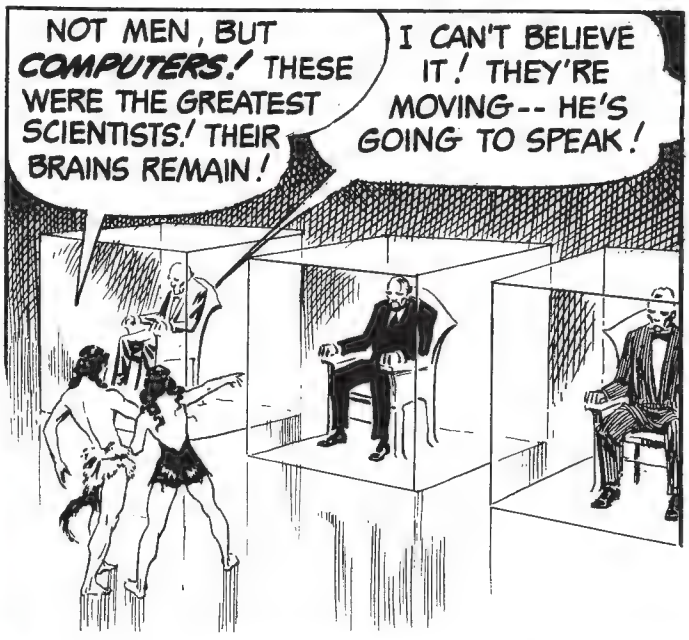



STATUES! COULD I HAVE BEEN MISTAKEN? THIS IS MORE LIKE AN ART MUSEUM THAN A SCIENCE HALL!
THEY'RE TERRIFYING! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH WORK!
IT'S ONLY MARBLE, MARI.
WAS *THIS* THE MESSAGE OF THE LEGEND... THAT ONLY THE *IMAGE* OF MAN REMAINS?
IT'S SO SMOOTH TO TOUCH. I'LL BREAK OFF A PIECE FOR A SOUVENIR...
NO, MARI!
WHY NOT? THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO APPRECIATE IT. WHO'S TO CARE?!
NO MATTER! IT'S ALL THAT'S LEFT!
WE WON'T BE THE ONES TO DESTROY IT!

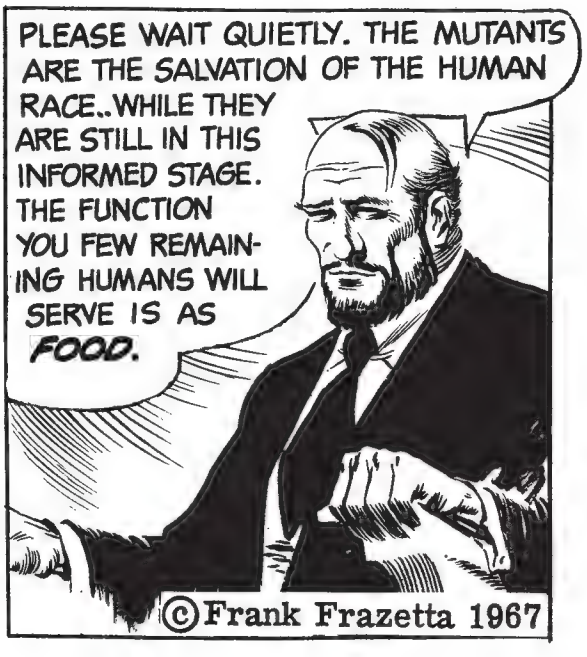

LOOK! THE HAND! IT MOVED!


A SLIDING PANEL... THE LEGEND!
IT'S FULL OF WEIRD GLOBES--AND LANE, INSIDE THE GLOBES!


THEY'RE DEAD, LANE! THERE IS YOUR LEGEND!

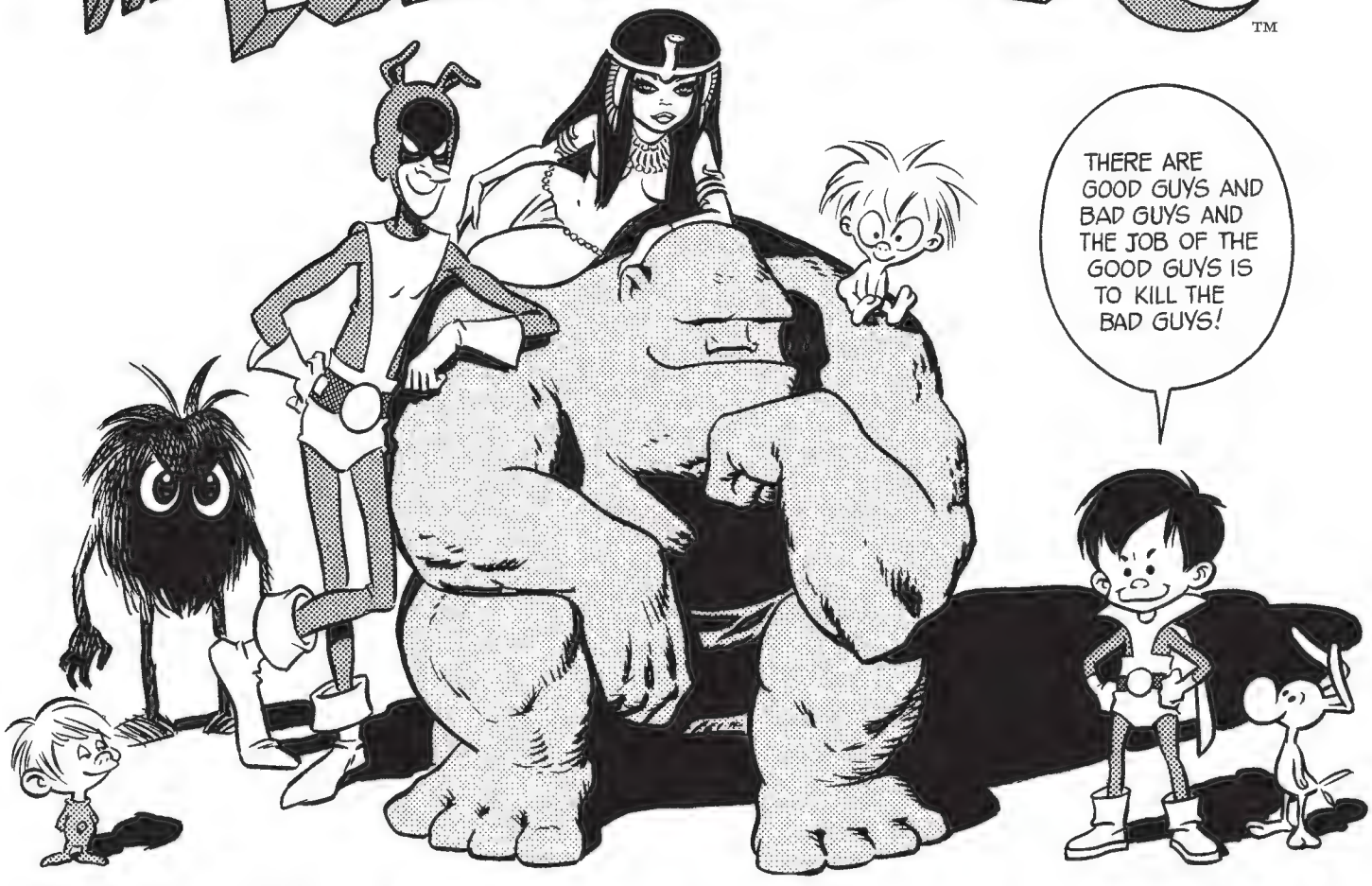

NOT MEN, BUT COMPUTERS! THESE WERE THE GREATEST SCIENTISTS! THEIR BRAINS REMAIN!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THEY'RE MOVING--HE'S GOING TO SPEAK!


THEIR LOGIC WILL SAVE US, MARI--LISTEN!


PLEASE WAIT QUIETLY. THE MUTANTS ARE THE SALVATION OF THE HUMAN RACE..WHILE THEY ARE STILL IN THIS INFORMED STAGE. THE FUNCTION YOU FEW REMAINING HUMANS WILL SERVE IS AS FOOD.
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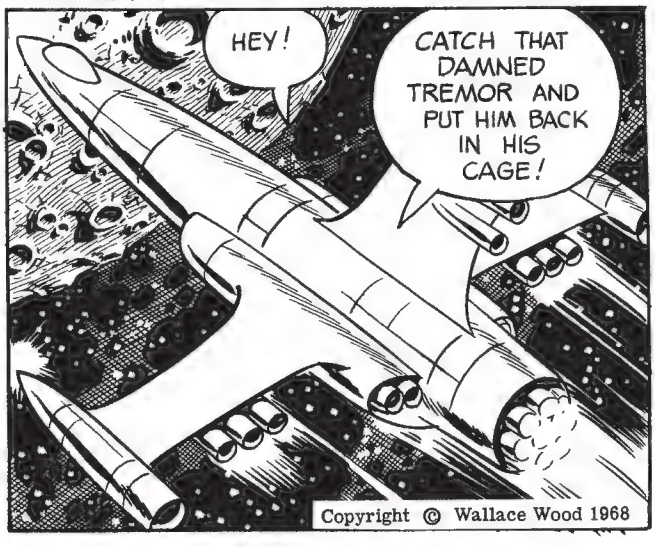
COME WITH US NOW TO HIGH ADVENTURE IN TIME AND SPACE, AS WE JOIN THE JOVIAN GIANT GLOMB (HE'S THE BIG FELLOW IN THE CENTER) AND (SURROUNDING HIM, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) WEE WIT, HAIRY JAMES, THE BLUE BANANA, VENUS, (SHE'S A MARTIAN) DIMENTIUS, I.Q. AND KENNETH BANGHEAD (ALSO PRESENT BUT NOT VISIBLE IS MINIMAN, THE MICROSCOPIC MUTANT), IN A TALE CALCULATED TO REACH A PULSE-POUNDING CRESCENDO OF APATHY WITH THIS AGGREGATION OF HEROES (SOME OF WHOM ARE ACTUALLY FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE FOLLOWING STORY...)

THE REJECTS™



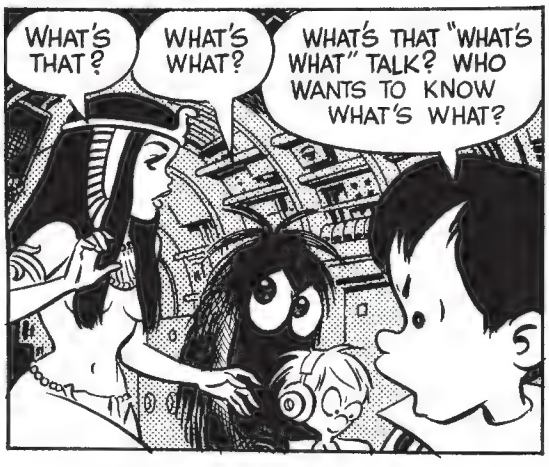
ONE DAY, AS THE REJECTS HQ LAB SHIP THE "WATT 4" HURTLES THROUGH THE VAST VOID OF OUTER SPACE, AT NEAR-SONIC SPEED ON A SECRET MISSION, (SO SECRET EVEN THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS) NOTHING MUCH IS HAPPENING. IT NEVER DOES...

SUDDENLY, A TREMOR RUNS THROUGH THE SHIP...



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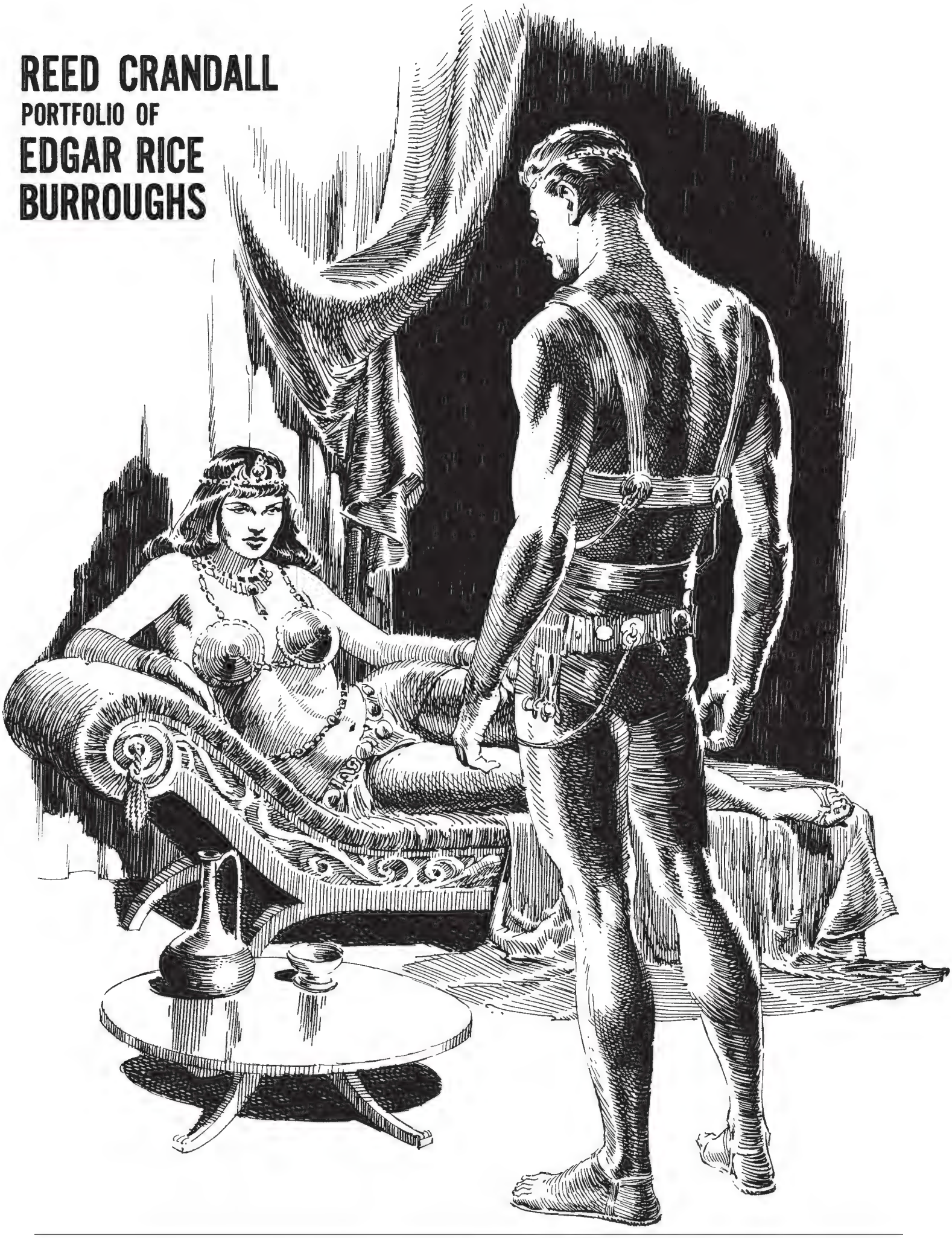
...AND THEN THEY ARE JOLTED BY AN UNEXPECTED VIBRATION (WHICH WE MAY EXPLAIN LATER) CAUSING CONSTERNATION AMONG THE CREW...

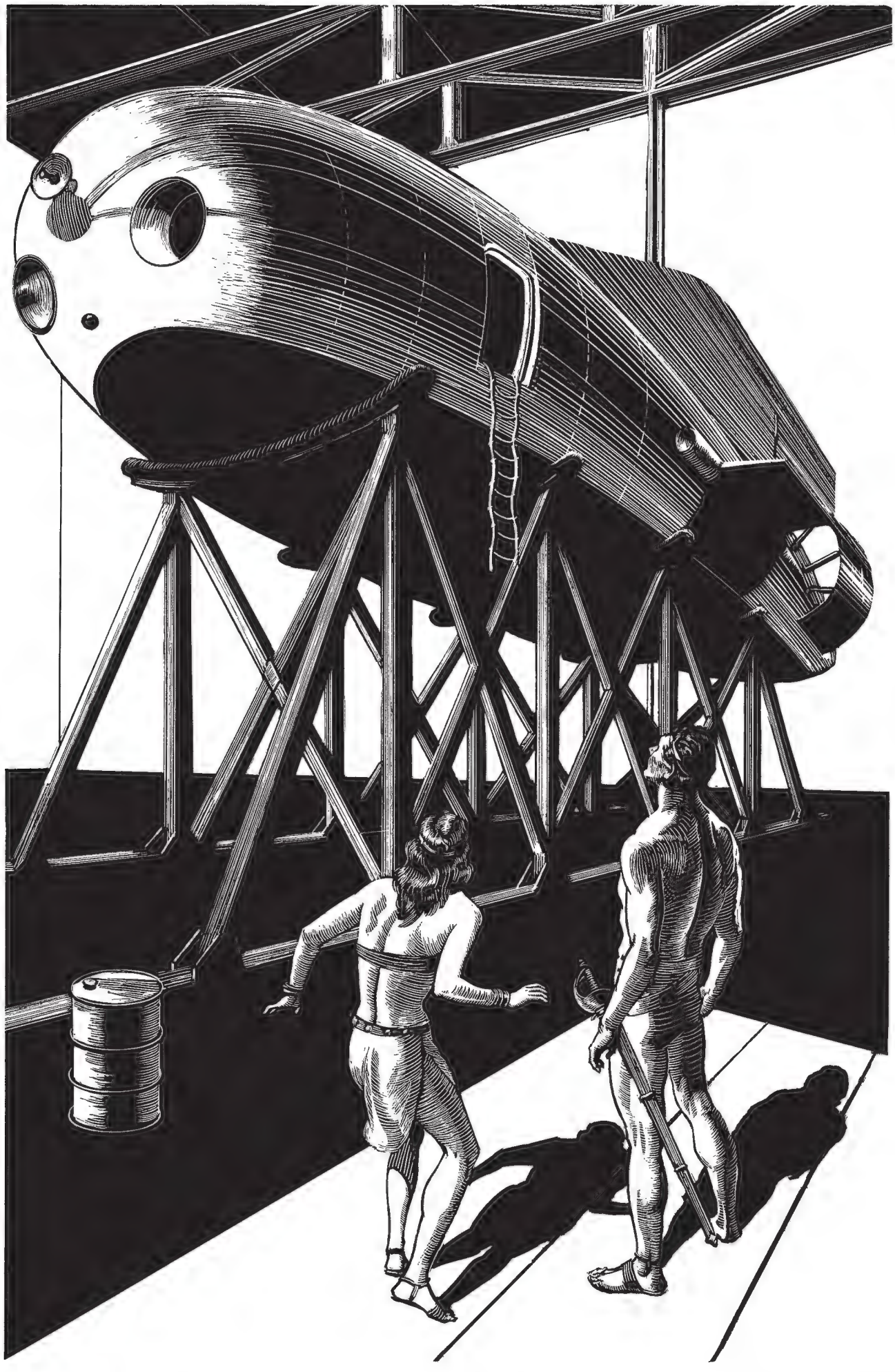



I.Q.! I CAN'T JUSTIFY THIS ON THE HYPER-SPACE WARP RATIONALIZER!
THAT'S OKAY, B.B. (SHORT FOR BLUE BANANA).. I'VE ALREADY VECTORED IT ON THE NULL PSIONICS JUSTIFIER...
THIS... IS... TEDDY-POOH!
... AND OFFHAND, I'D SAY WE'VE BEEN TRANSPORTED TO THE PREHISTORIC PAST OF AN ALIEN PLANET ON THE VERY MARGIN OF THE KNOWN UNIVERSE!
THIS IS OBVIOUSLY THE WORK OF L. SPRAGUE DE FREEB!
WHO?
JUSTIFY THAT MARGIN!
ATTENTION ALL HANDS! MAN YOUR POSITIONS! FIRE RETRO BOOSTERS! CUT MAIN THRUST! BATTEN HATCHES AND HEAVE TO!
HEAVE WHAT?
TO WHERE?
PUT GLIDE ANGLE ON THE CYBERNETIC ENTRY PROGRAMMER! REVERSE AUTOMATIC BALLAST! HAVE I FORGOTTEN ANYTHING?
HANG ON FOR THE CRASH!
THERE! ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS WE'VE TOUCHED DOWN..
LIGHT AS A FEATHER!
.. WASN'T IT, WISE ASS?
GLOMB... STEP OUTSIDE AND TAKE A LOOK AROUND!
YOU... BET! COME...TEDDY-POOH!
WAIT! IT'S A THOUSAND FOOT DROP!
QUICK, VENUS, SEE IF YOU CAN TUNE HIM IN ON THE THOUSAND-FOOT DROP SCANNER!
HEEEYYY
A THOUSAND FEET LATER...
WOW! HE PENETRATED A HUNDRED FEET INTO THE PLANET'S CRUST!
GLOMB! SPEAK TO ME!
WATCH... FIRST... STEP! IT'S... A... KILLER!
ER...
I HATE TO MENTION THIS, CHIEF... BUT WE'RE SURROUNDED BY HOSTILE ALIENS!
HMM-OBVIOUSLY THEY ARE LIQUEFACTIONIST DEVIATES, IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZABLE BY THE CHARACTERISTIC BLUE PROTUBERANCE ON THE NETHER PATELLA...
I DON'T SEE ANY BLUE PROTUBER-ANCE...
THAT'S IRRELEVANT!
THE ALIENS PERSUADE OUR HEROES TO ACCOMPANY THEM TO THEIR HABITAT...
LOOK! THEIR HABITAT!
... AND THE PRIMITIVE BEGINNINGS OF A RUDIMENTARY RELIGIOUS CULTURE CONCEPTUALIZED WITH AN ANTHROMORPHIC PHYSICAL DIETY...
OH, YEAH? WELL, I'VE GOT ONE FOR YOU! WE'RE GONNA PLAY GUESSING GAMES! THE HERMETICALLY SEALED ENVELOPE, PLEASE!
MINIMAN, YOU'D BETTER GO BACK AND HELP GLOMB GET OUT OF THE HOLE...
OKAY!


THIS IS THE RIDDLE OF THE AGES.. GUESS THE CORRECT ANSWER AND YOU GO FREE!
IF WE MISS?
YOU WILL BE LIQUEFIED BY THE LIQUEFACTIONISTS!
READY? HERE IT IS... WHAT WALKS ON FOUR LEGS IN THE MORNING ON TWO LEGS AT NOON AND THREE LEGS AT NIGHT?
I KNOW! I KNOW! I READ THAT ONE YEARS AGO IN SCHOOL!
IT'S MAN!
WRONG! IT'S ME!
YOU LOSE!
SUDDENLY...
IT'S TEDDY-POOH TIME!
YUM! PEOPLE SOUP!
HEY! WHAT THE HELL?
BANZA!
QUICK! WE MUST FLEE! ONLY THE PUNY ONE STANDS IN OUR WAY...
...AND HE IS UNARMED!
I'M NEVER UNARMED WHEN I'M WITH MY HAMMERBIRD!
KEN! NOW!
I HATE THIS! I HATE IT!
SEIZING KENNETH BANGHEAD BY THE FEET, I.Q. LAYS ABOUT HIM LIKE A MADMAN, USING THE HAMMERBIRD'S HARD NOSE AS A WEAPON!
HAVE AT YOU, SCUM!
GIVES ME A SLIGHT NOSE ACHE!
FOUL!
WELL, WE TOOK CARE OF THE LIQUEFACTIONIST DEVIATES. I.Q. NOW LET'S SEE ABOUT GETTING BACK TO THE FUTURE!
I THINK I'VE LOCATED THE TROUBLE I.Q. THE CYBER-NETICALLY PROGRAMMED CHRONOFRAM WAS NOT ACTIVATED!
MAYBE IT'S THE NEGATIVE FACTOR?
...NO, I DON'T THINK SO, IT'S PROBABLY THE SOTWEED FACTOR!
NO, YOU'RE BOTH WRONG! IT'S OBVIOUSLY THE MAX FACTOR!
SOMEBODY GO GET THE KEYS FROM MAX!
?!
WAIT A MINUTE.. WHAT ABOUT L. SPRAGUE DE FREEB?
WHO?
THERE THEY GO! DO YOU LIKE THE REJECTS? THEY LIKE YOU! DON'T FAIL TO MISS THE NEXT THRILLING EPISODE IF YOU CAN....

REED CRANDALL
PORTFOLIO OF
EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS



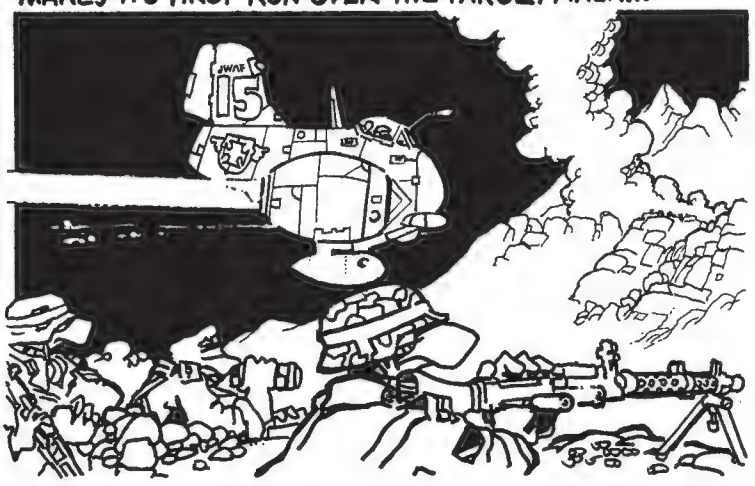



R. GRANDALL


THE JUNKWAFFEL INVASION OF KRUPPENNY ISLAND
G-D-D-M
WATCHIT STUPID, DAT TOAD IN THERE IS STILL ALIVE! YOU KEEP POAKIN' YOUR FAT MOUTH IN AN HE'S GONNA' BLOW IT OFF... LET'S TOSS IN A POTATO MASHER.....
NO, NOW QUIET I CAN TALK THA' CREEP OUT... ...AY TOAD?.. COMEON OUT TOAD!.. YOU COME OUT AN YOU'LL GET SOME CHOCOLATE AN CIGARETTES... REAL JUNKWAFFEL CIGARETTES...
POP
POP
PUNT
POW
VAUGHN BODE' 68
OKAY, I COMIN' OUT, LIZARD!.. I IS THROWIN DOWN MY GUN AN SURRENDERIN' ACCORDIN' TO DA ARTICLES OF WAR... ... YOU AHH, YOU SURE YOU GONNA' LAY SOME CHOCOLATE AN STUFF ON ME IF I COMES OUT?...
I SAID I WOULD DIDN'T I?...
HERE I IS... GIMME' MY CHOCOLATE....
PUNCH
PUNCH
PUNCH
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THE JUNKWAFFEL PARATROOPERS PUSH INLAND WITH LIGHT RESISTANCE. UNTIL THEY REACH A LOW RANGE OF ROCKY HILLS...THE TOADS ARE SO DEEPLY ENTRENCHED THE LIZARD GROUND FORCES HAVE TO CALL FOR AN AIR-STRIKE...THE AIRFORCE **POLLYWOG-17** FIGHTER-BOMBER MAKES ITS FIRST RUN OVER THE TARGET AREA...



YOU MAY SCOFF WHEN I TELL YOU THE STATISTICS OF THIS FIERCE, BUT TINY WAR...YOU MAY THINK THIS WAR IS UNIMPORTANT WHEN COMPARED TO THE ENORMOUS CONFLICTS THAT RAGE ACROSS THE SURFACES OF VAST PLANETS, EVEN WHOLE SOLAR SYSTEMS...YOU MAY INDEED WONDER IF THIS WAR AGAINST THE TOADS ON KRUPPENNY ISLAND IS SIGNIFICANT IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF LIZARD EXPANSION IN THE GALAXY...**IT ISN'T!**..THIS WAR IS OF **NO** CONSEQUENCE WHATEVER!..THE WHOLE ACTION WILL NEVER BE MENTIONED ON THE NEWS OF THE SMALLEST PLANETS!..TO THE BILLIONS OF JUNKWAFFEL AND OTHER GIANT LIZARD RACES, KRUPPENNY HAS NO MEANING...**IS** IT THEN, A BLOODY SENSELESS CONFLICT?.. **NOT ENTIRELY**, NOT WHEN IT SERVES AS A FIRST VEHICLE OF INTRODUCTION TO EARTH, TO YOU...

THIS WAR, THIS AWFUL, THIS TINY, THIS **AWFUL TINY WAR** IS STAGED FOR YOUR BEGINNING COMPREHENSION OF THE UNCOMPREHENDABLE ENORMITY OF THE **GALACTIC LIZARD**...

WHAT OTHER MORE SUITABLE APPROACH CAN ONE USE?.. COULD I EFFECTIVELY SHOW A TYPICAL JUNKWAFFEL WAR THAT INVOLVES **70,000** INFANTRY DIVISIONS?... OF COURSE NOT, UNCOMPREHENDABLE, TOO ALIEN TO OUR FIXED PROPORTIONALIZED MENTALITIES...

I THINK IT BEST WE DWELL ON A CONTROLABLE SCALE, A WAR THAT INVOLVES **36 LIZARDS** AND **50 TOADS**.....



IF THERE IS A NATURAL ORDER IN THE UNIVERSE IT MUST BE THE **LIZARD**...OF ALL LIVING CREATURES IN OUR GALAXY NO LIFE FORM IS SO WIDE SPREAD, SO DIVERSE IN THEIR CULTURAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL EVOLVEMENT...THERE ARE **700** DIFFERENT SPECIES OF BI-POD LIZARDS RANGING FROM THE DEPLORABLY MORONIC TO THE SUPERBLY COOL, FROM CAVE DWELLERS TO STAR HOPPERS...

THE JUNKWAFFEL, A SOCIOLISTICALLY ORIENTATED CIVILIZATION, ROUGHLY PARALLELS OUR EARTH OF 1939 OR 40, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ADVANCED AERONAUTICAL CONCEPTS AND A CONTROL OF PLANETS SPREAD ACROSS 27 SOLAR SYSTEMS!

HOMO-SAPIENS THINKS 'HE' IS A WAR-LIKE CREATURE, A REAPER OF LIVING THINGS.....

THE JUNKWAFFEL MUST PUT US TO SHAME...THEY ARE WHOLLY DEVOTED TO THE GAME OF CIVILIZED MURDER..







KRUPPENNY ISLAND IS LOCATED ON THE SMALL PLANET PUNT-15 WHICH IS FOUND ORBITING IN THE JAMES JUMP ASTEROID BELT WHICH IS PART OF THE BORST II SYSTEM, WHICH BELONGS TO THE OUTER-LEFT JUNKWAFFEL STATE...

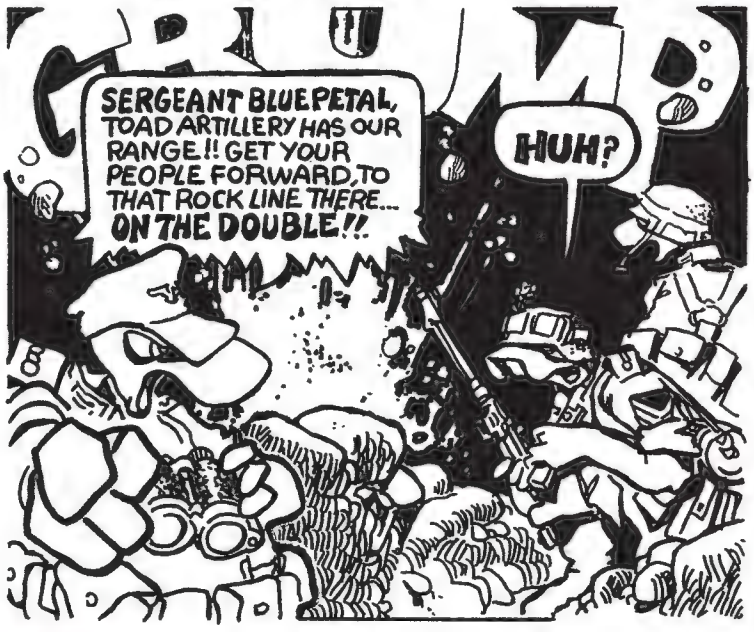
PUNT-15 IS 500 KILLOMETERS IN DIAMETER AND HAS ONLY ONE EXPORTABLE PRODUCT, TIN... MOST TIN-BEARING PLANETS OF THIS SIZE WOULD NOT HAVE AN ATMOSPHERE, BUT PUNT-15 HAS! THIS IS DUE TO THE EXTRAORDINARY GRAVITATIONAL ATTRACTION OF ITS SOLID CORE OF KUG 495 (THE 2nd DENSEST ELEMENT IN THE UNIVERSE)

THE JUNKWAFFEL HAVE OPERATED THE DUCK-ADDER TIN PROCESSING PLANT FOR SIXTY-THREE YEARS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE. BUT THEN, TWO WEEKS AGO, ON THE 8th OF SPRING THE TOADS CAME DOWN TO DESTROY THE DROWSY PEACE...



ON THE 8th OF SPRING A TOAD PENETRATOR SPACE MACHINE PAUSED ON ITS MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY TO ORBIT PUNT-15 3 TIMES... ON THE SECOND ORBIT A LARGE FIFTY-TOAD PARA-FORT WAS DROPPED OFF INTO THE ATMOSPHERE WHERE 12 GREAT CARGO CHUTES LOWERED THE FORT INTACT ONTOP OF THE VALUABLE AND AS YET, UN-EXPLOITED, VIRGIN ISLAND OF KRUPPENNY... THE TOAD MOTHER SHIP, SEEING THAT ALL WAS WELL, SIGNALED DEPARTURE AND MOVED INTO THE VOID ON ITS UNFANTOMABLE MISSION...

FORT WART, AS THE TOAD-CREW CHRISTENED IT, WAS READY BY THE 10th... THEY CONTACTED THE DUCK-ADDER PLANT BY WIRELESS AND DEMANDED 97% OF THE TOTAL TIN PRODUCTION TO BE SET ASIDE FOR THE TOAD EMPIRE... IF THE DEMAND WAS REFUSED THEY WOULD DETONATE THE ENTIRE PLANET WITH A CHAIN-FISSION BOMB!! TENSIONS MOUNTED AT THE TIN PLANT AS THE DEAD-LINE NEARED... THE CIVILIAN PERSONNEL WERE IN FAVOR OF IMMEDIATE COMPLIANCE TO THE TOAD ULTIMATUM, BUT THE MILITARY GARRISON (THIRTY-SIX PARATROOPERS, ONE TRANSPORT PLANE, ONE PW-17 FIGHTER AND TWO NAVY GUNBOATS) WERE ALL FOR CALLING THE TOADS' BLUFF... THEY RECOGNIZED THE FIMILIAR STRATEGY OF THE TOADS, THE OH SO OBVIOUS FACADE OF FALSE THREATS...







THE JUNKWAFFEL GARRISON WAS PUT ON A WAR FOOTING ONCE THE CIVILIAN OPPOSITION WAS UNDER MARTIAL LAW... THEY BEGAN IMMEDIATE PREPARATIONS FOR AN INVASION OF KRUPPENNY.. THE MILITARY KNEW HOW TO DEAL WITH A TOAD BLUFF... IT DIDN'T TAKE THE TOADS AT FORT WART LONG TO REALIZE THEY WERE BEING CALLED OUT... ONE THING TO DO, THEY DETONATED THE BOMB!!

... FORTUNATELY FOR THE LIZARDS ON PUNT-15, THE CHAIN-FISSION BOMB PROVED TO BE A TREMENDOUS DUD! THAT LEFT THE FIFTY TOADS NO CHOICE BUT A FIGHT TO THE END WITH THEIR MORTAL ENEMIES!...

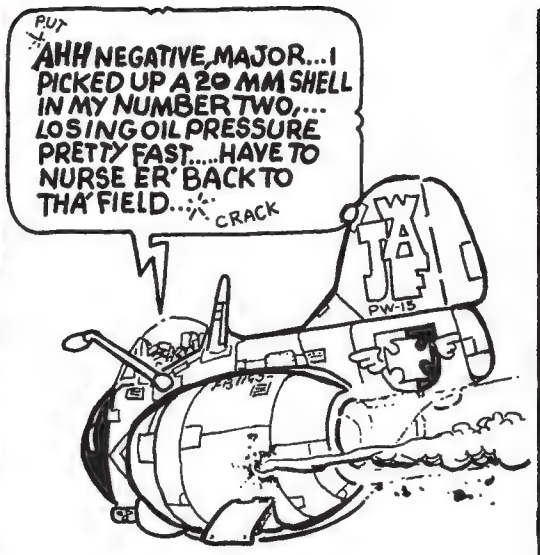
THE FIRST ACTUAL ACTION OF THE WAR CAME ON THE NIGHT OF THE 15th. THE NAVY GUNBOATS TRIED TO LAND A VOLUNTEER CIVILIAN DEMOLITION TEAM ON KRUPPENNY, BUT THEY RAN AGROUND ON A SAND BAR AND BLEW UP!!

THE SHOCK OF THIS NAVAL CATASTROPHY SET THE INVASION BACK AN ENTIRE WEEK!!

ON THE MORNING OF THE 22nd OF SPRING, THE PW-17, FLOWN BY PILOT OFFICER FARGO VON-RASEBERRY BEGAN SOFTENING UP THE COASTAL POSITIONS WITH NAPALM AND CONCUSSION BOMBS...

THE FLYING TIME BETWEEN THE TIN FACTORY AIRFIELD AND KRUPPENNY WAS ONLY TEN MINUTES!





PILOT OFFICER RASEBERRY BLASTED KRUPPENNYS BEACHES FOR FOUR HOURS BEFORE THE TRANSPORT TOOK OFF FOR ITS THIRTY MINUTE FLIGHT TO THE COMBAT AREA...

THE BIG TROOP PLANE CARRIED TWENTY CRACK JUNKWAFFEL PARACHUTISTS OF THE PUNT-15, 1ST AIRBORNE COMPANY...

DESPITE THE SOUND POUNDING THE PW-17 GAVE THE TOADS THEY STILL PUT UP A DANGEROUS AMOUNT OF HEAVY AND LIGHT CALIBER FLACK...

VON RASBERRY FLEW COVER FOR THE TRANSPORT ROLLING IN TIME AND AGAIN IN ATTEMPTS TO SILENCE THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT IN AND AROUND FORT WART...

THE TRANSPORT, AN OLD DANDALION C-23 B MADE TWO PRELIMINARY RUNS TO MARK WIND-DRIFT, ALL THE WHILE UNDER FIRE...DESPITE A FEW SMALL ARMS HITS IN THE FUSELAGE AND TAIL THE GROUND FIRE WAS INEFFECTIVE... THE DROP BEGAN...



THE TRANSPORT PILOT, MORELY BUN, SET HIS DROP UP FROM NORTH TO SOUTH ALONG THE COAST..ONE AFTER THE OTHER THE DASHING CHUTISTS DROPPED AWAY FROM 1,500 METERS..

THEN, HALFWAY INTO THE DROP A NEAR BURST OF FLACK WRECKED THE COCKPIT!..THE EXPLOSION WAS SO VIOLENT IT DESTROYED THE CO-PILOT, HANS KRINKEL, AND SEVERELY WOUNDED PILOT, BUN... STUNNED, BUN BANKED OFF TO THE RIGHT OF HIS COURSE, OUT OVER THE SEA...THE REMAINING EIGHT JUNKWAFFELS, THINKING THE SHIP WAS IN ITS DEATH PLUNGE, BAILED OUT... THEY ALL DROWNED!..BUN MANAGED TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE C-23 AND CRASHLANDED SAFELY ON THE END OF THE TIN FACTORY RUNWAY.....

OF THE TWELVE CHUTISTS JUMPED OVER THE TARGET; ONE PARACHUTE FAILED TO DEPLOY, KILLING ITS WEARER, AND ANOTHER CHUTIST WAS GUNNED TO DEATH AS HE DRIFTED TO THE GROUND...



THAT LEAVES TEN JUNKWAFFEL PARATROOPERS TO DRIVE THE WELL ENTRENCHED, WELL FORTIFIED, FANATICALLY DETERMINED TOADS OFF KRUPPENNY IS.



AND OF THOSE TEN PARATROOPER LIZARDS, TWO HAVE JUST BEEN HIT WITH A HIGH-EXPLOSIVE SHELL...



PREVUE

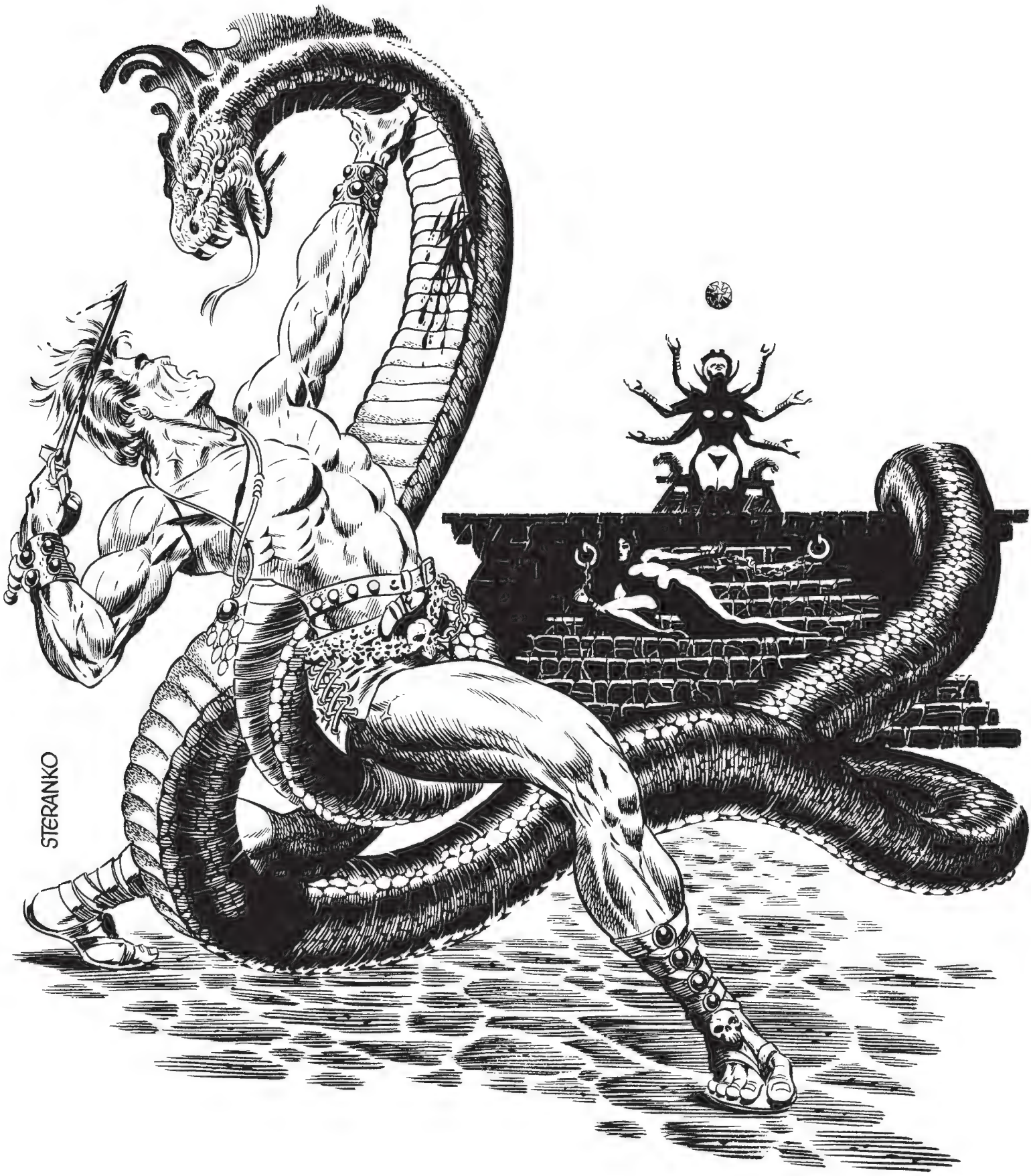
The adventures of TALON



By
Jim Steranko

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STERANKO


STERANKO



alien

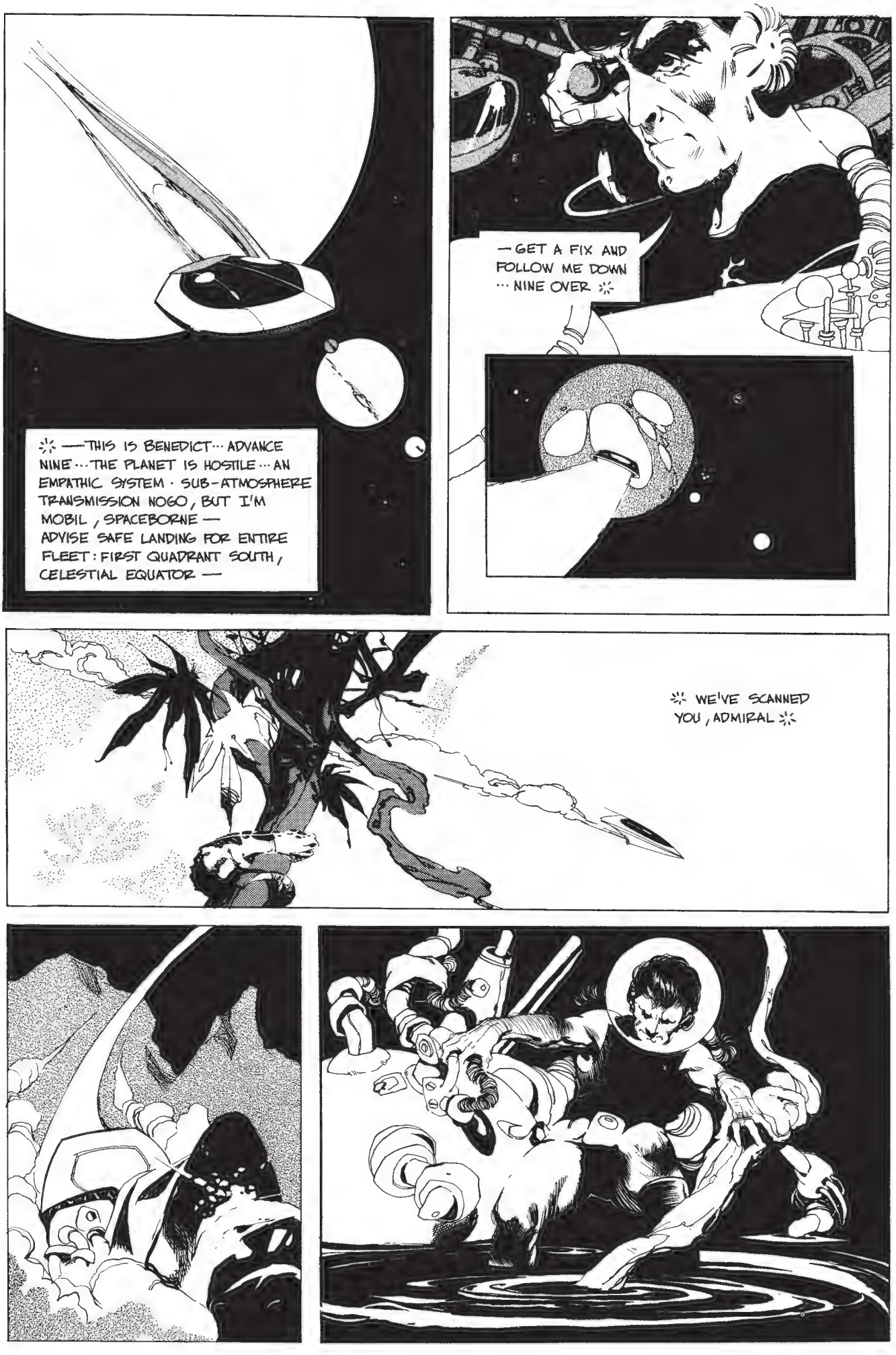
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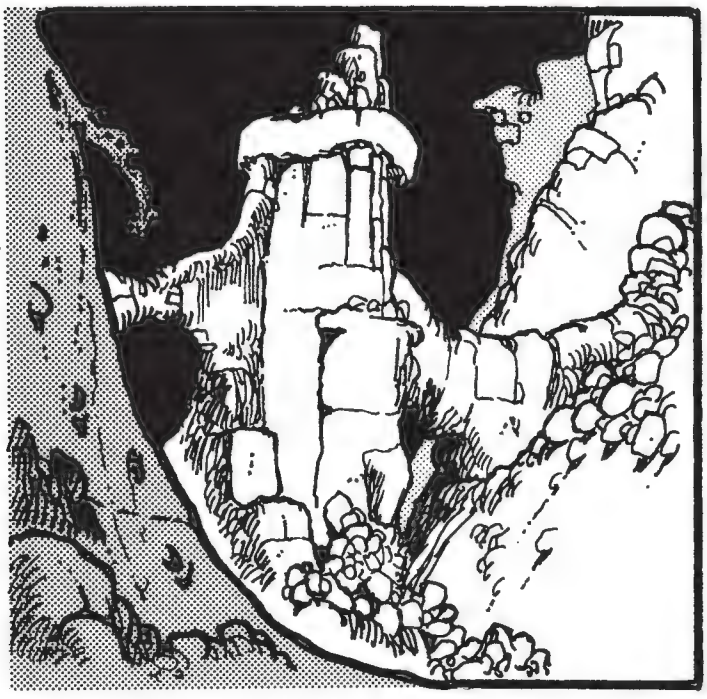



⁘ —THIS IS BENEDICT··· ADVANCE NINE···THE PLANET IS HOSTILE···AN EMPATHIC SYSTEM · SUB-ATMOSPHERE TRANSMISSION NOGO, BUT I'M MOBIL, SPACEBORNE — ADVISE SAFE LANDING FOR ENTIRE FLEET: FIRST QUADRANT SOUTH, CELESTIAL EQUATOR —
— GET A FIX AND FOLLOW ME DOWN ··· NINE OVER ⁘
⁘ WE'VE SCANNED YOU, ADMIRAL ⁘

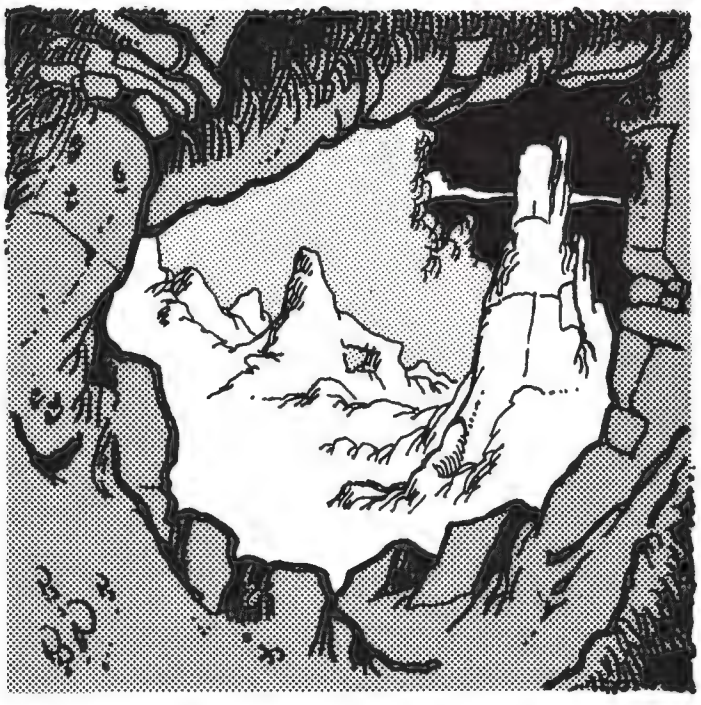

✲ WE'RE RELIEVED TO HEAR FROM YOU, BENEDICT — PROBES HAVE ESTABLISHED GROUND LEVEL INTERFERENCE, AND WE COULDN'T COME AFTER YOU WITHOUT COORDINATES···
···WE'VE MONITORED ADVANCE NINE TOUCHDOWN — BE WITH YOU IN PLUS ONE FOUR HOURS — COMMAND OUT ✲


GRAY MORROW

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON, A LIGHT BREEZE COMES DOWN OVER THE HIGH MOUNTAINS AND ENDLESS CANYONS..THE BREEZE HISSES THE SAND OVER GREAT, WIND ERODED ROCKS AND DUMPS IT LIKE FRAIL DREAMS AND SAD WHISPERS OVER AGES OLD TIRED FORMATIONS OF STONE... IT IS A QUITE, DEATHLESS, TIMELESS WORLD..... IT IS, OUR FUTURE.....



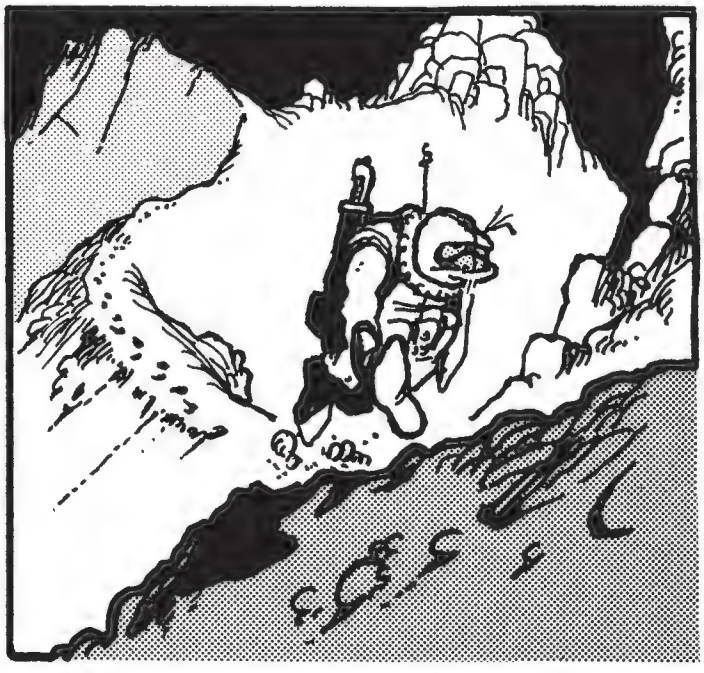
YOU KNOW, WE SPECULATE.. WE TRY TO OUTGUESS THE UNPREDICTABLE WHIMS OF NATURE AND WE ARE SELDOM RIGHT.. BUT, WE CAN GUESS WITH UNERRING ACCURACY, THE FUTURE OF HOMO SAPIENS. THAT CREATURE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HIMSELF!.. MAN, IS THE GREAT DESTROYER, THE INSATIABLE TAKER.. MAN, WILL BLOW HIMSELF UP AND LEAVE A WORLD STERILIZED BY HIS GENIUS.



BUT, MAN, OR WHAT THE RADIATION AND THE CONSTANT HOT RAINS AND HIGH ROENTGEN DUST STORMS MAKE HIM, WILL STILL CLING TENACIOUSLY TO HIS QUESTIONABLE RIGHT TO SURVIVE..... HIS INALIENABLE RIGHT TO CONTINUE STRIPPING HIS RAPED WORLD.....



IN THE LATE AFTERNOON, WHEN THE LIGHT BREEZE BLOWS THE HISSING SAND, A FORM, A CREATURE, AN UGLY VERSION OF A ONCE-MAN, PADS ACROSS THE WARM SAND..... HE IS A MUTATION BELONGING, LIKE AN ANIMAL, TO THE 'RADIOS': A REMNANT OF LONG PAST CIVILIZATIONS... HE IS A LOPER, A RADIO CONTROLLED LOPER, SCOUTING AHEAD OF A RADIO TRANSPORT...




BOOM
SMACK
ARGH!
KRUMP
OOOOOOH...
SNAP
HUH? COUGH... NO! NOT KILL THIS ONE! ..... NO KILL!!
PUNCH
CLICK CLACK

THE LOPER IS LEFT TO LAY AND ROT QUIETLY IN THE COZY CREEK BED....HE IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE NOW. HE WILL ROT OR BE EATIN' BY SOME STARVING MUTATION...IT DOESN'T MATTER...WE FOLLOW HIS KILLER, A SLIGHTLY BUILT MAN-LIKE CREATURE WHO WEARS THE NOT UNCOMMON 'WHITE CLOTH' TO HIDE HIS UGLY DEFORMITY..HE CLIMBS UP THE CRUMBLING HILL FEELING A DEEPNESS, A HEAVYNESS OF PURPOSE THAT OVER SHADOWS THE RIGHT OR WRONG OF MURDER...HIS RIDING ANIMAL, A GRASSER, MUNCHES ON DUST WEED.. IT WATCHES THE LITTLE MASTER WITH UNCONCERN...THE MAN-CREATURE PULLS THE GRASSER TO ITS KNEES AND MOUNTS THE CREEKY LEATHER SADDLE..HE SHOVES HIS WOLF CARBINE INTO THE SADDLE SCABBARD, DRAWS HARD WITH THE REINS, KICKING THE DUMB BEAST UP ON ITS FEET....THE GRASSER MOVES OFF WITH A SLOW, DELIBERATE STRIDE. ROCKING OR WADDLING ALONG NARROW PATHS HIGH ABOVE THE CANYON FLOOR.....

THIS BEGINS IT, THIS STARTS THE PROPHECY OF THE FUTURE, THE HISSING SAND, AND THE LONELY FIGURE HIGH ATOP A PLAINS BEAST....THIS IS WHERE I BEGIN THE UNIQUE STORY OF THE LITTLE MAN-CREATURE WHO IS KNOWN TO A FEW MUTATIONS, TO A FEW ANIMALS, TO A FEW FLYING THINGS AS:

COBALT 60

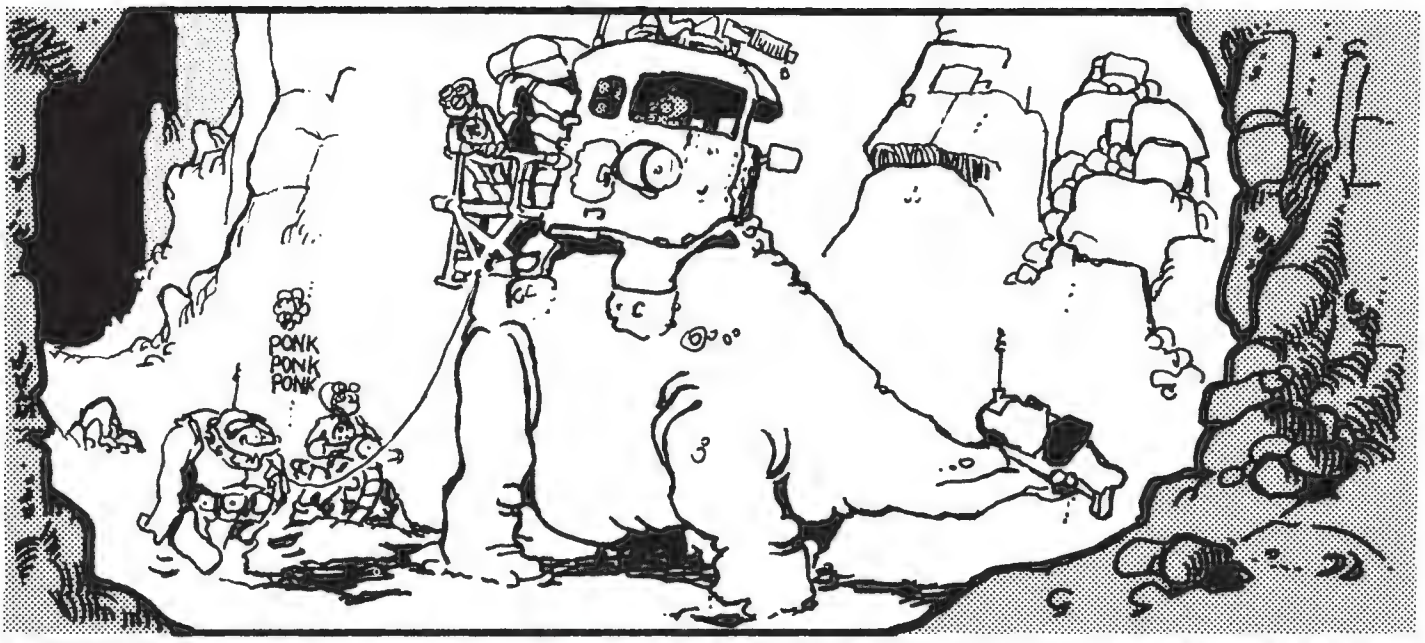
BY VAUGHN BODE'

ALRIGHT..YOU BE EASY NOW, BIG ANIMAL....I SEE..... WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR...

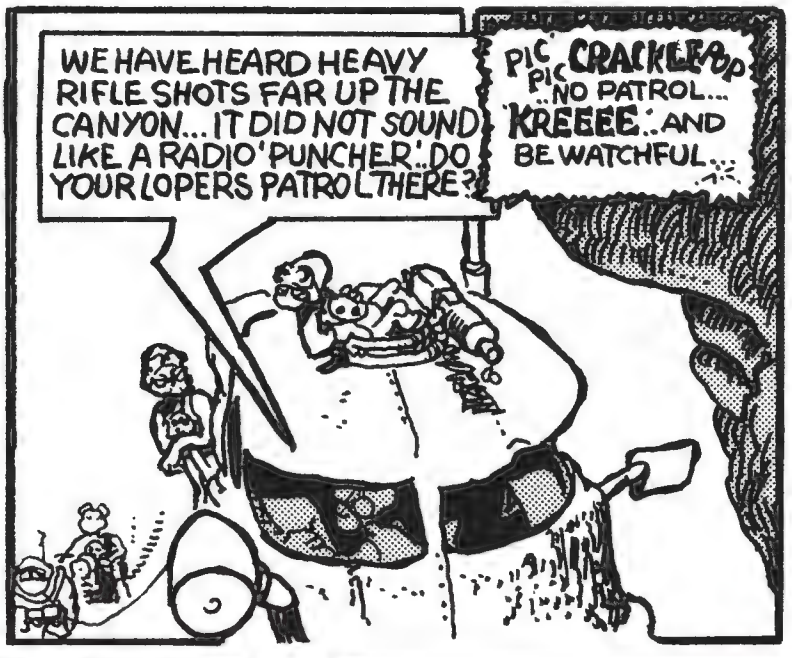
SNIFF

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...THE RADIO TRANSPORT IS COMING...


PONK
PONK
PONK


RADIO BORDER STATION, WE CALL YOU...WE CALL YOU..
POP CRACK..YES... PACK PIC, POP ..SPEAK NOW..


WE HAVE HEARD HEAVY RIFLE SHOTS FAR UP THE CANYON... IT DID NOT SOUND LIKE A RADIO 'PUNCHER'..DO YOUR LOPERS PATROL THERE?
PIC PIC CRACKLE POP ..NO PATROL... KREEEE..AND BE WATCHFUL...


STARDUST, TELL THEM OUR LOPER SCOUT IS OUT TOO LONG....
PUT PONK PONK


MORE CAUSE FOR SUSPICION...THERE CAN BE MUTATIONS UP THERE...
SONG, YOU WILL PREPARE THE MECHANICAL GUN...

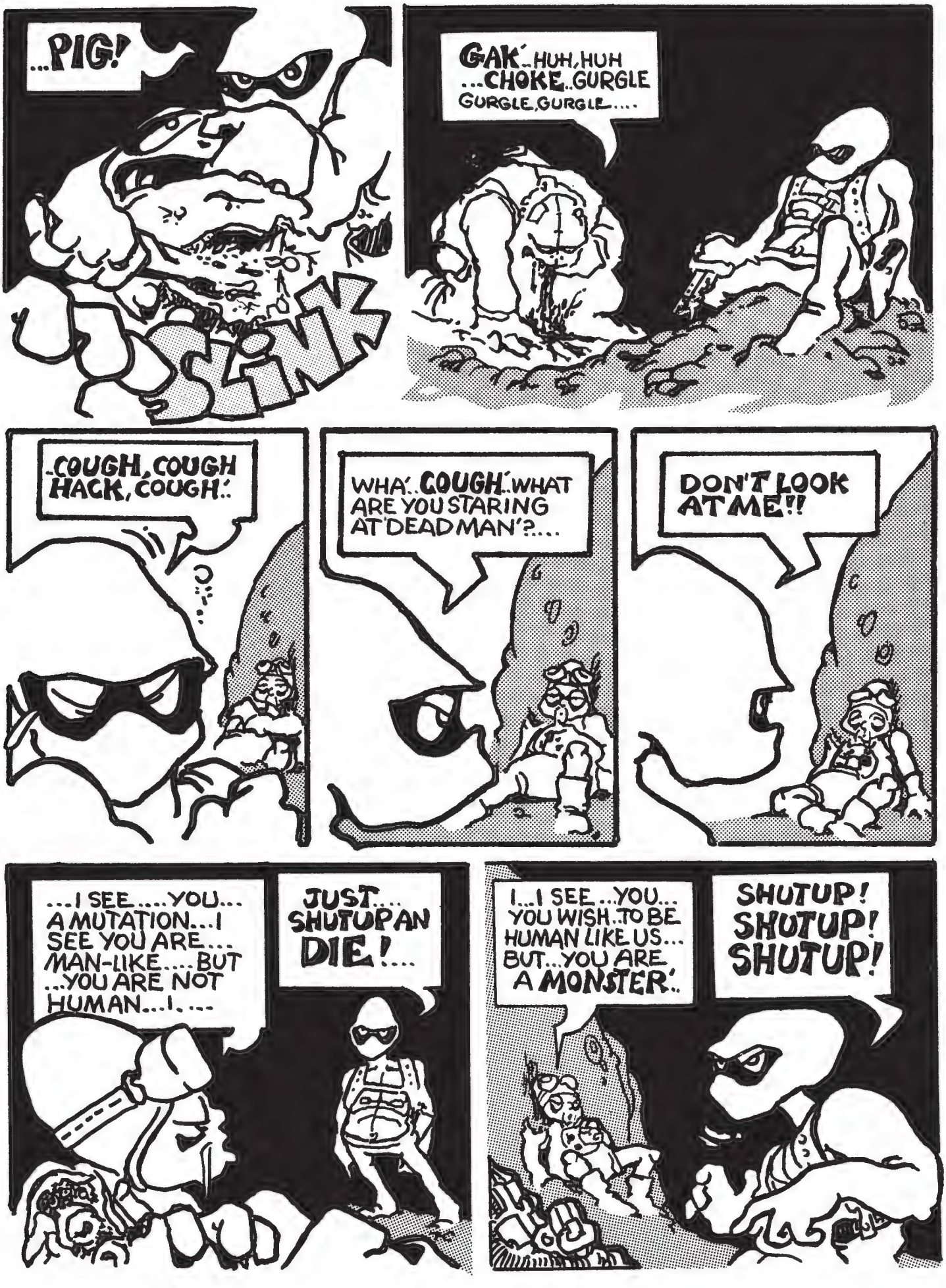

HAHA, THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE WAS A BLUE CRACKER AT ITS WORK, EH?.. YOU WORRY TOO EASY, HONORED ONE..

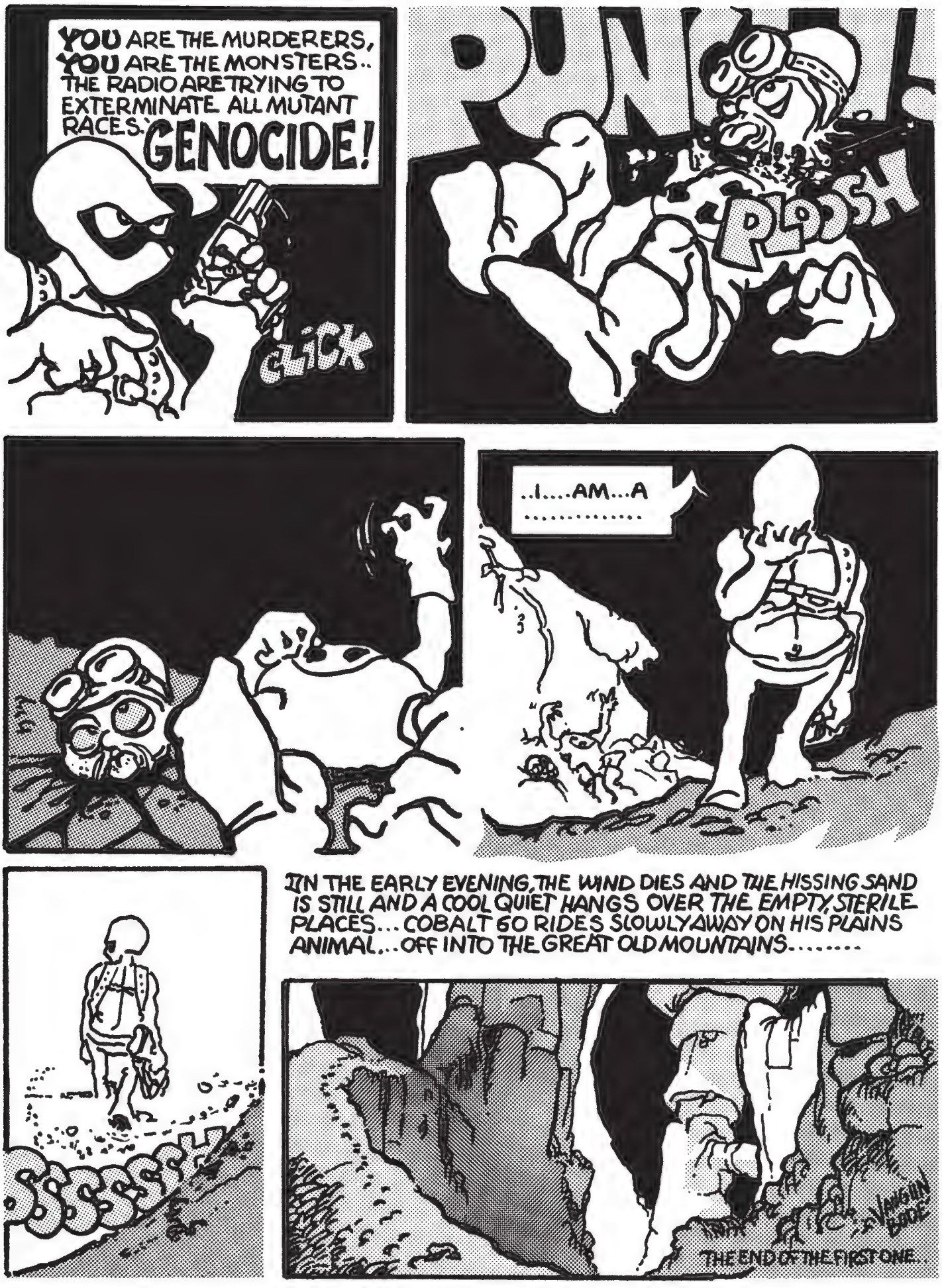

BOOM
OOMPH
..OH HOLY GOD....
STARDUST, GET TO THE MECHANICAL GUN, QUICKLY!!....
SEE YOUR BEAST GET TO ACTION.!
BOOM!
YAR!
SNIC
YOU PIG!!
ZIT
EEEEE


I SEE THA' BASTARD!!
BANG BANG
NEERRR
BUMP
THUMP
YARGH!
DA..DAMN YA,..YOU!!!
SOOOOTH
CLICK
PUNT
CLICK
CLICK
PUNT
OOOOOH GEESSS KAK'COUGH!


MAKE US COVER!...SHOOT DOWN THE GREAT GRASSER!!
BUNT BUNT BUNT
PING PING PING
'SNIFF, DAMN THEM!...SNIFF:' I WILL CIRCLE TO KILL THEM NOW...'COUGH:'
HONORED ONE, DID...DID WE HIT HIM?..ALL IS QUIET.....
BE STILL... WE WAIT...
DEAD MEN!
click.
BUNT
KLAK
CLICK
RUNT
CLICK
RUNT
PLEEEE..
THOK
SPLAT


WHAT?... JESUS, THA' LOPER!!
RARRGH!
KOOOFE!
SUNCH!
GASP' CAN'T..GET.. YARRRGH!
...HO!.. SQUIRM AWAY LIKE WORM FISH!.. PA-TOOY! YOU BREAK LOPER'S TOOTH...
NO, LISTEN! IT'S OVER! I WANTED THE RADIOS... WE CAN STOP... LISTEN!!.. I.. COUGH, COUGH...
HEHEHE..
YOU SCARDED TO FIGHT, BIG LOPER....
.....I...SMASH LITTLE SKULL, WORM-MAN!
WOOOOO
CHING
HEY!
YOU DIRTY...


...PIG!
SINK
GAK..HUH,HUH ...CHOKE..GURGLE GURGLE,GURGLE....
..COUGH,COUGH HACK,COUGH..
WHA'..COUGH'..WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT DEAD MAN'?....
DON'T LOOK AT ME!!
...I SEE....YOU... A MUTATION...I SEE YOU ARE... MAN-LIKE....BUT ...YOU ARE NOT HUMAN...!....
JUST.... SHUTUP AN DIE!....
I...I SEE...YOU... YOU WISH..TO BE HUMAN LIKE US... BUT...YOU ARE A MONSTER'..
SHUTUP! SHUTUP! SHUTUP!


YOU ARE THE MURDERERS, YOU ARE THE MONSTERS.. THE RADIO ARE TRYING TO EXTERMINATE ALL MUTANT RACES. GENOCIDE!
CLICK
PUNK
PLOSH
..I....AM...A
.....
IN THE EARLY EVENING, THE WIND DIES AND THE HISSING SAND IS STILL AND A COOL QUIET HANGS OVER THE EMPTY, STERILE PLACES... COBALT 60 RIDES SLOWLY AWAY ON HIS PLAINS ANIMAL... OFF INTO THE GREAT OLD MOUNTAINS.....
SSSSS
VAUGHN BODE
THE END OF THE FIRST ONE...


LIMPSTREL
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I CAN'T SEE WHY YOU'RE DISTRAUGHT... YOU'VE GOT A BEAUTIFUL FOREST, A FINE SWAMP, AND PLENTY OF FRESH MEAT...
IT'S NOT REALLY A QUESTION OF BEING WELL CARED FOR. THERE ARE SOME NEGATIVE SIDES TO THE STORY, TOO.
SEE THAT SWAMP OUT THERE? ...TEEMING WITH LIFE... MAGNIFICENT REPTILIAN CREATURES... A VARIETY NUMBERING IN THE THOUSANDS... BUT, WE HAVE OUR PROBLEMS..
TINY (YECHH!) FURRY THINGS... 'MAMMALS', THEY CALL THEMSELVES... STEALING OUR EGGS AND DEVOURING OUR UNBORN YOUNG (UGH! DISGUSTING). ANNOYING LITTLE CRITTERS... COULD BE DOWN RIGHT DANGEROUS IF WE'D LET THEM GET OUT OF HAND...
BUT, THEY'LL PASS ON... NOT SUITED TO THE CLIMATE, YOU KNOW... ...JUST CONTEMPORARY PESTS. THIS WORLD WAS MADE FOR REPTILES, YOU KNOW...
SO, YOU HOPE TO PROSPER AND EVENTUALLY TO RULE THE WORLD?
FACT IS WE DO! WE'VE RULED THROUGH EONS PAST AND WE RULE SUPREME AND UNCHALLENGED NOW...
...AND WE WILL BE 'HERE LONG AFTER THOSE TINY WARM-BLOODED MONSTERS ARE GONE! YES, WE DINOSAURS WILL CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AND GROW TILL WE BECOME MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE. IT'S INEVITABLE.
I SEE.
IT SOUNDS PROMISING... GOOD LUCK...


LIMPSTEL
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BUY A GIRL A DRINK?
STRONG 'N SILENT, EH?
MMMM! I LIKE THAT...
WHADAYA SAY? YOUR PLACE OR MINE.
'EY! YOU TAKIN' AD-VANTAGE O' MUH GIRL? I DON' TINK I LIKE 'AT!
I FIX YOU GOOD...OOoooPS...
CRACK!
HEY!
WHAT FOR YOU SLUGGIN' M' DORTER?
SPLAT
B-TANG
YA SHOULDEN OUGTTOF HIT ME BRUDDER!
CROWN MY COLLEAGUE, WILL YA?
HEY BOYS! IT'S A FREE FOR ALL!!
BAR


THE JOURNEY
© BETTY + GRAY MORROW
1970



She cast her memory back to that last moment; once again she viewed the flames and, beyond, the mortal faces, bestial with bloodlust.....





How frightened she might have been if not for Mila's council. "You must not protest, child, for they only send you on a journey. A journey to an age of safety where you may learn and grow in peace."

"Will I really be the greatest witch of all, Mila?"

"For you, all things are possible. Of us all, only you have the gift of eternal self-awareness. But beware of pride, a mortal failing that can bring you harm."



"Jealous! The greatest prophet of the Elders, jealous of me! But what a strange mode of travel is the stake. Could Mila have been wrong?"



Drifting through countless eons, the witch grew impatient. Suspicion chewed her thoughts. How like a lamb she had gone to the slaughter, and only because Mila had counseled it! Afraid to destroy her, fearful of the punishment of the Elders, had Mila sent the young witch here, forever out of reach? "I can destroy Mila. But how might the Elders repay that crime?" The witch brooded. "What could be worse than this vacuum in eternity?"



Willing her mind into one small malignant sphere she hurled it through the barriers, searching relentlessly through the crevices and fields of earth and on to the mountaintops. "Mila!"

"Foolish child! You will destroy everything!"
"Only you, Mila!"



She thrilled to the hideous cry, covering the earth, sending mortals quaking to their islands of imagined safety.



But with her last breath, Mila laughed. "And still shall you know eternity. I have forseen it!"

Peace. She had done the undoable and her vacuous existence remained unchanged. On and on she drifted, feeling neither hunger, pain nor fear, secure in her self-contained universe.




Violence pushed at her; were the Elders come at last? In panic she tried to resist and was torn brutally from her limbo, into a madhouse of unendurable sound and vicious light. She screamed out an agony of fear.


Throughout the sterile room the infant's wail resounded pitifully.
"How could a thing like this happen?"
"Who knows? a twisted gene, a hormone gone wild."

"Imagine, once, a thing like this would have been allowed to live."
"My dear, the world would have insisted upon it!"



With a deft stroke he drove the needle home..





Through the abyss the witch floated~~~~~~

THE CITY IN THE SEA
by Edgar Allan Poe

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and
the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.





There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

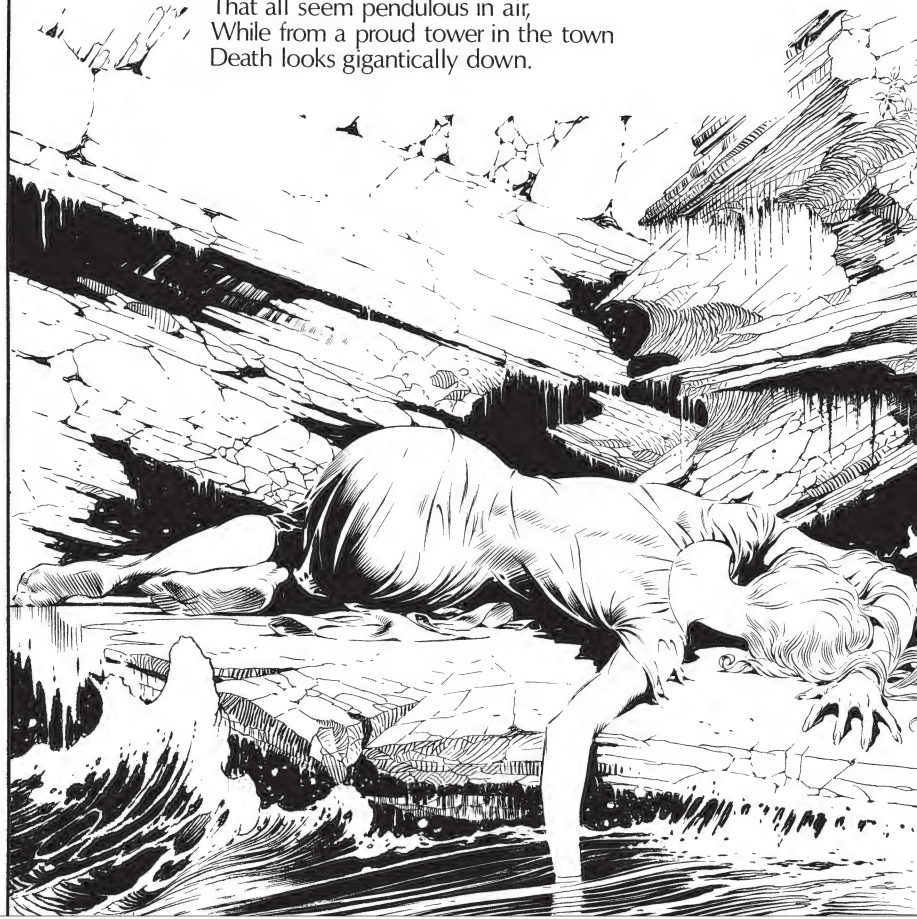
No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—



Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.



Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.



There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

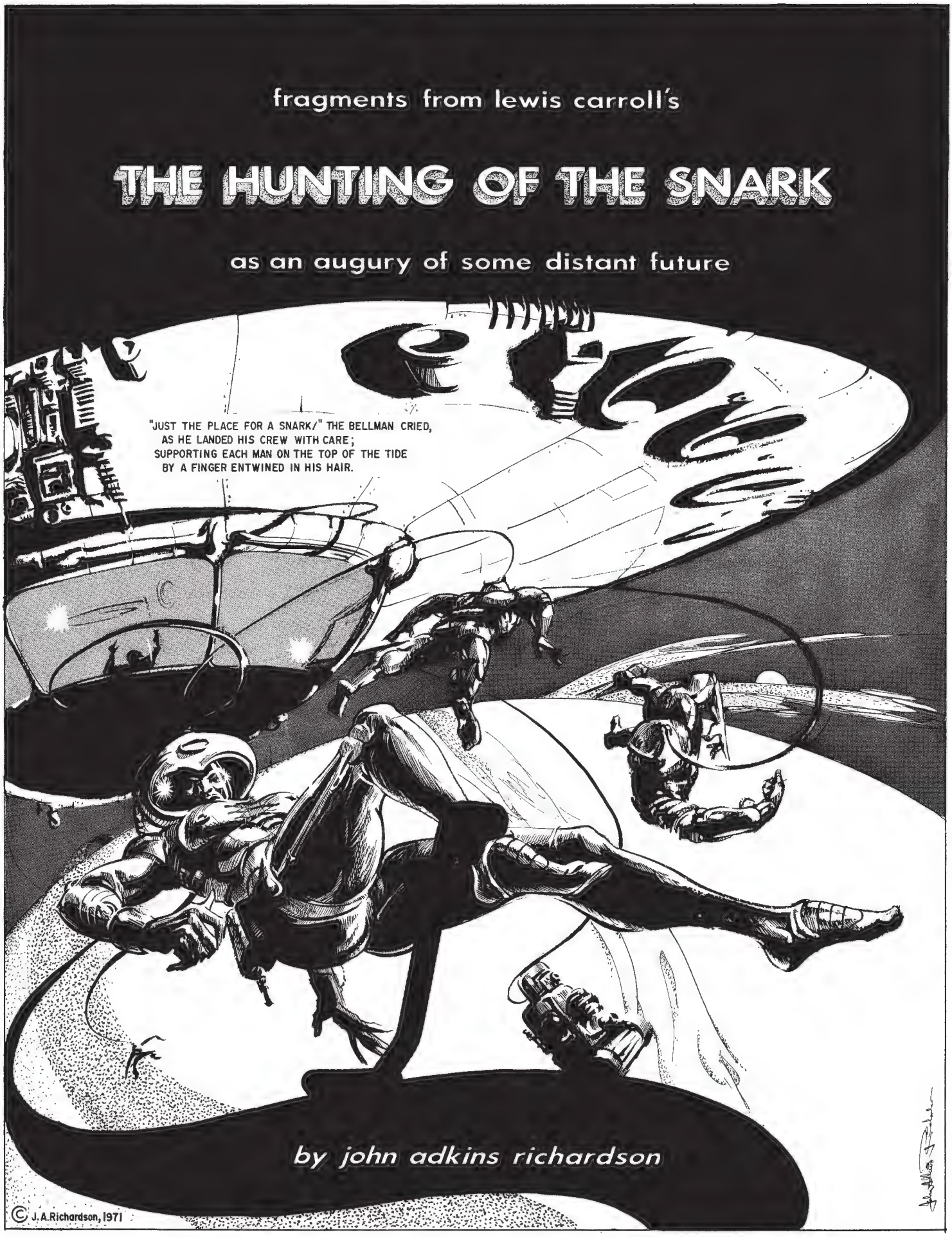






But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave–there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

art by Frank Frazetta
lettering by Gail Smith

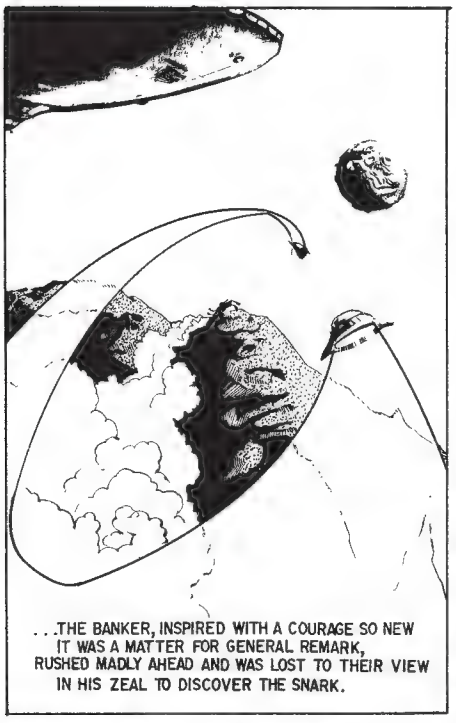

fragments from lewis carroll's
THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK
as an augury of some distant future
"JUST THE PLACE FOR A SNARK/" THE BELLMAN CRIED,
AS HE LANDED HIS CREW WITH CARE;
SUPPORTING EACH MAN ON THE TOP OF THE TIDE
BY A FINGER ENTWINED IN HIS HAIR.
by john adkins richardson
© J.A.Richardson, 1971


"JUST THE PLACE FOR A SNARK/ I HAVE SAID IT TWICE:
THAT ALONE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE CREW.
JUST THE PLACE FOR A SNARK/ I HAVE SAID IT THRICE:
WHAT I TELL YOU THREE TIMES IS TRUE."
THE CREW WAS COMPLETE: IT INCLUDED A BOOTS—
A MAKER OF BONNETS AND HOODS—
A BARRISTER, BROUGHT TO ARRANGE THEIR DISPUTES—
AND A BROKER, TO VALUE THEIR GOODS.
A BILLIARD-MARKER, WHOSE SKILL WAS IMMENSE, MIGHT PERHAPS HAVE WON MORE THAN HIS SHARE—
BUT A BANKER, ENGAGED AT ENORMOUS EXPENSE, HAD THE WHOLE OF THEIR CASH IN HIS CARE.
THERE WAS ALSO A BEAVER, THAT PACED ON THE DECK, OR WOULD SIT MAKING LACE IN THE BOW:
AND HAD OFTEN (THE BELLMAN SAID) SAVED THEM FROM WRECK THOUGH NONE OF THE SAILORS KNEW HOW.
THERE WAS ONE WHO WAS FAMED FOR THE NUMBER OF THINGS HE FORGOT WHEN HE ENTERED THE SHIP:
HIS UMBRELLA, HIS WATCH, ALL HIS JEWELS AND RINGS, AND THE CLOTHES HE HAD BOUGHT FOR THE TRIP.


THE LAST OF THE CREW NEEDS ESPECIAL REMARK,
THOUGH HE LOOKED AN INCREDIBLE DUNCE:
HE HAD JUST ONE IDEA— BUT, THAT ONE BEING "SNARK,"
THE GOOD BELLMAN ENGAGED HIM AT ONCE.
HE CAME AS A BUTCHER: BUT GRAVELY DECLARED,
WHEN THE SHIP HAD BEEN SAILING A WEEK,
HE COULD ONLY KILL BEAVERS.
THE BELLMAN LOOKED SCARED,
AND WAS ALMOST TOO FRIGHTENED TO SPEAK:
BUT AT LENGTH HE EXPLAINED, IN A TREMULOUS TONE,
THERE WAS ONLY ONE BEAVER ON BOARD;
AND THAT WAS A TAME ONE HE HAD OF HIS OWN,
WHOSE DEATH WOULD BE DEEPLY DEPLORED.
THE BEAVER'S BEST COURSE WAS, NO DOUBT, TO PROCURE A SECOND-HAND DAGGER-PROOF COAT—
SO THE BAKER ADVISED IT — AND NEXT, TO INSURE ITS LIFE IN SOME OFFICE OF NOTE ...
YET STILL, EVER AFTER THAT SORROWFUL DAY,
WHENEVER THE BUTCHER WAS BY,
THE BEAVER KEPT LOOKING THE OPPOSITE WAY,
AND APPEARED UNACCOUNTABLY SHY.
THE BELLMAN HIMSELF THEY ALL PRAISED TO THE SKIES — SUCH A CARRIAGE, SUCH EASE AND SUCH GRACE!
SUCH SOLEMNITY, TOO! ONE COULD SEE HE WAS WISE, THE MOMENT ONE LOOKED IN HIS FACE!
BUT THE DANGER WAS PAST—
THEY HAD LANDED
AT LAST,
WITH THEIR BOXES,
PORTMANTEAUS,
AND BAGS:
YET AT FIRST SIGHT THE CREW WERE NOT PLEASED WITH THE VIEW
WHICH CONSISTED OF CHASMS AND CRAGS.

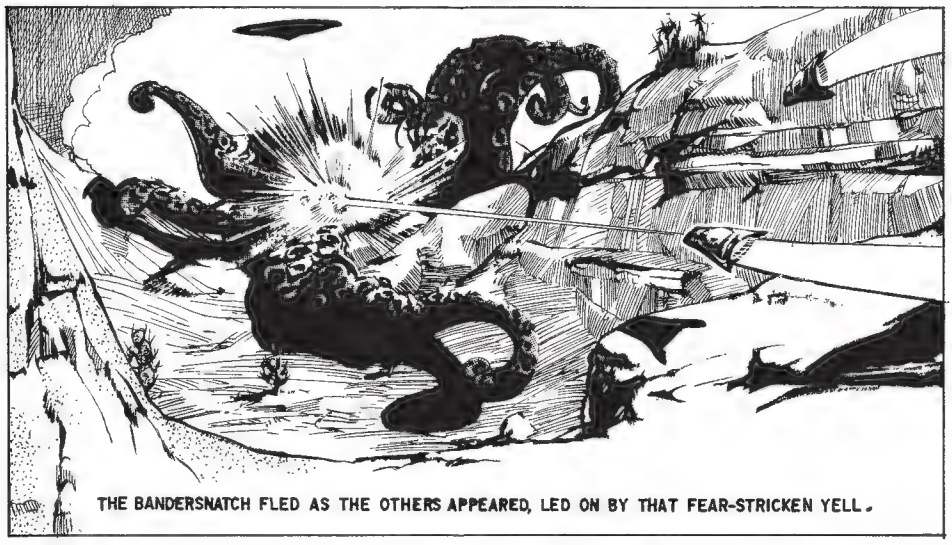

THERE WAS SILENCE SUPREME! NOT A SHRIEK, NOT A SCREAM,
SCARCELY EVEN A HOWL OR GROAN,
AS THE MAN THEY CALLED "HO!" TOLD HIS STORY OF WOE
IN AN ANTEDILUVEAN TONE.
"A DEAR UNCLE OF MINE (AFTER WHOM I WAS NAMED)
REMARKED, WHEN I BADE HIM FAREWELL——"
"OH, SKIP YOUR DEAR UNCLE!" THE BELLMAN EXCLAIMED, AS HE ANGRILY TINGLED HIS BELL.
"BUT OH, BEAMISH NEPHEW, BEWARE OF THE DAY, IF YOUR SNARK BE A BOOJUM! FOR THEN YOU WILL SOFTLY AND SUDDENLY VANISH AWAY, AND NEVER BE MET WITH AGAIN!"
THEY SOUGHT IT WITH THIMBLES, THEY SOUGHT IT WITH CARE:
THEY PURSUED IT WITH FORKS AND HOPE;
THEY THREATENED ITS LIFE WITH A RAILWAY-SHARE;
THEY CHARMED IT WITH SMILES AND SOAP.
THEN THE BUTCHER CONCEIVED AN INGENIOUS PLAN FOR MAKING A SEPARATE SALLY; AND HAD FIXED ON A SPOT UNFREQUENTED BY MAN, A DISMAL AND DESOLATE VALLEY.
BUT THE VERY SAME PLAN TO THE BEAVER OCCURRED: IT HAD CHOSEN THE VERY SAME PLACE:
YET NEITHER BETRAYED, BY A SIGN OR A WORD, THE DISGUST THAT APPEARED IN HIS FACE.
EACH THOUGHT HE WAS THINKING OF NOTHING BUT "SNARK" AND THE GLORIOUS WORK OF THE DAY;
AND EACH TRIED TO PRETEND THAT HE DID NOT REMARK THAT THE OTHER WAS GOING THAT WAY.
BUT THE VALLEY GREW NARROWER AND NARROWER STILL,
AND THE EVENING GOT DARKER AND COLDER,
TILL (MERELY FROM NERVOUSNESS, NOT FROM GOOD WILL)
THEY MARCHED ALONG SHOULDER TO SHOULDER.


THEN A SCREAM, SHRILL AND HIGH,
RENT THE SHUDDERING SKY
AND THEY KNEW THAT SOME DANGER
WAS NEAR:
THE BEAVER TURNED PALE TO THE
TIP OF ITS TAIL,
AND EVEN THE BUTCHER FELT
QUEER.
"'TIS THE VOICE OF THE JUBJUB!"
HE SUDDENLY CRIED.
THE BUTCHER WOULD GLADLY HAVE TALKED TILL NEXT DAY,
BUT HE FELT THAT THE LESSON MUST END,
AND HE WEPT WITH DELIGHT IN ATTEMPTING TO SAY
HE CONSIDERED THE BEAVER HIS FRIEND:
WHILE.....
.....THE BEAVER CONFESSED, WITH AFFECTIONATE LOOKS
MORE ELOQUENT EVEN THAN TEARS,
IT HAD LEARNED IN TEN MINUTES FAR MORE THAN ALL BOOKS
WOULD HAVE TAUGHT IN SEVENTY YEARS.

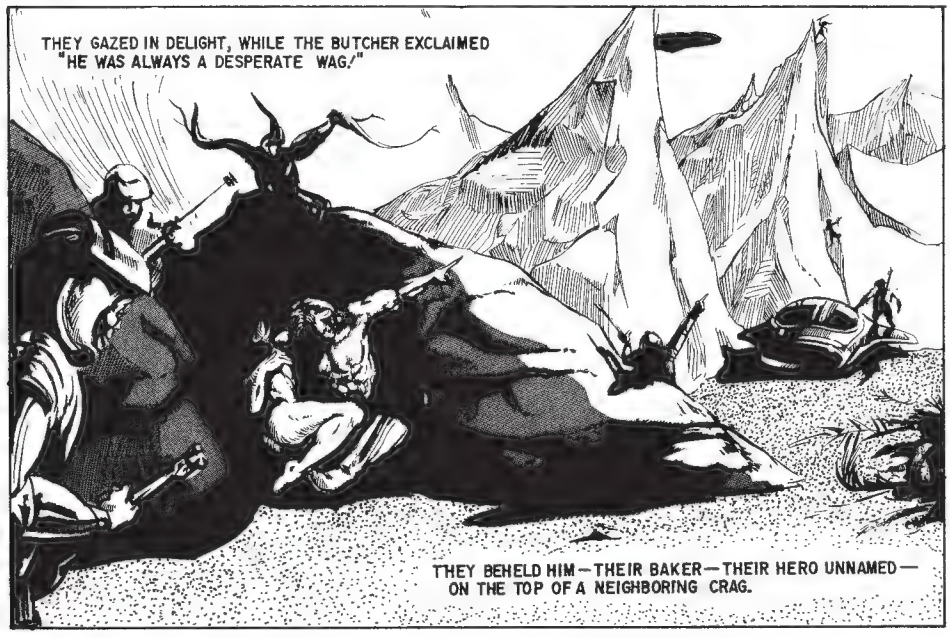

. . .THE BANKER, INSPIRED WITH A COURAGE SO NEW
IT WAS A MATTER FOR GENERAL REMARK,
RUSHED MADLY AHEAD AND WAS LOST TO THEIR VIEW
IN HIS ZEAL TO DISCOVER THE SNARK.

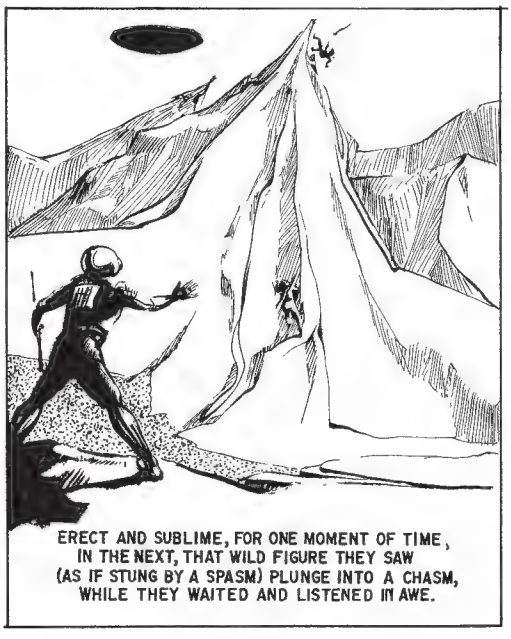

BUT WHILE HE WAS SEEKING WITH THIMBLES AND CARE,
A BANDERSNATCH QUICKLY DREW NIGH . . .


AND GRABBED AT THE BANKER, WHO SHRIEKED IN DESPAIR,
FOR HE KNEW IT WAS USELESS TO FLY.


THE BANDERSNATCH FLED AS THE OTHERS APPEARED, LED ON BY THAT FEAR-STRICKEN YELL.


AND THE BELLMAN REMARKED "IT IS JUST AS I FEARED!"
AND SOLEMNLY TOLLED ON HIS BELL.
"LEAVE HIM HERE TO HIS FATE—IT IS GETTING SO LATE!"
THE BELLMAN EXCLAIMED IN A FRIGHT.
"WE HAVE LOST HALF THE DAY. ANY FURTHER DELAY,
AND WE SHA'N'T CATCH A SNARK BEFORE NIGHT!"


THEY GAZED IN DELIGHT, WHILE THE BUTCHER EXCLAIMED
"HE WAS ALWAYS A DESPERATE WAG!"
THEY BEHELD HIM—THEIR BAKER—THEIR HERO UNNAMED—
ON THE TOP OF A NEIGHBORING CRAG.


ERECT AND SUBLIME, FOR ONE MOMENT OF TIME,
IN THE NEXT, THAT WILD FIGURE THEY SAW
(AS IF STUNG BY A SPASM) PLUNGE INTO A CHASM,
WHILE THEY WAITED AND LISTENED IN AWE.

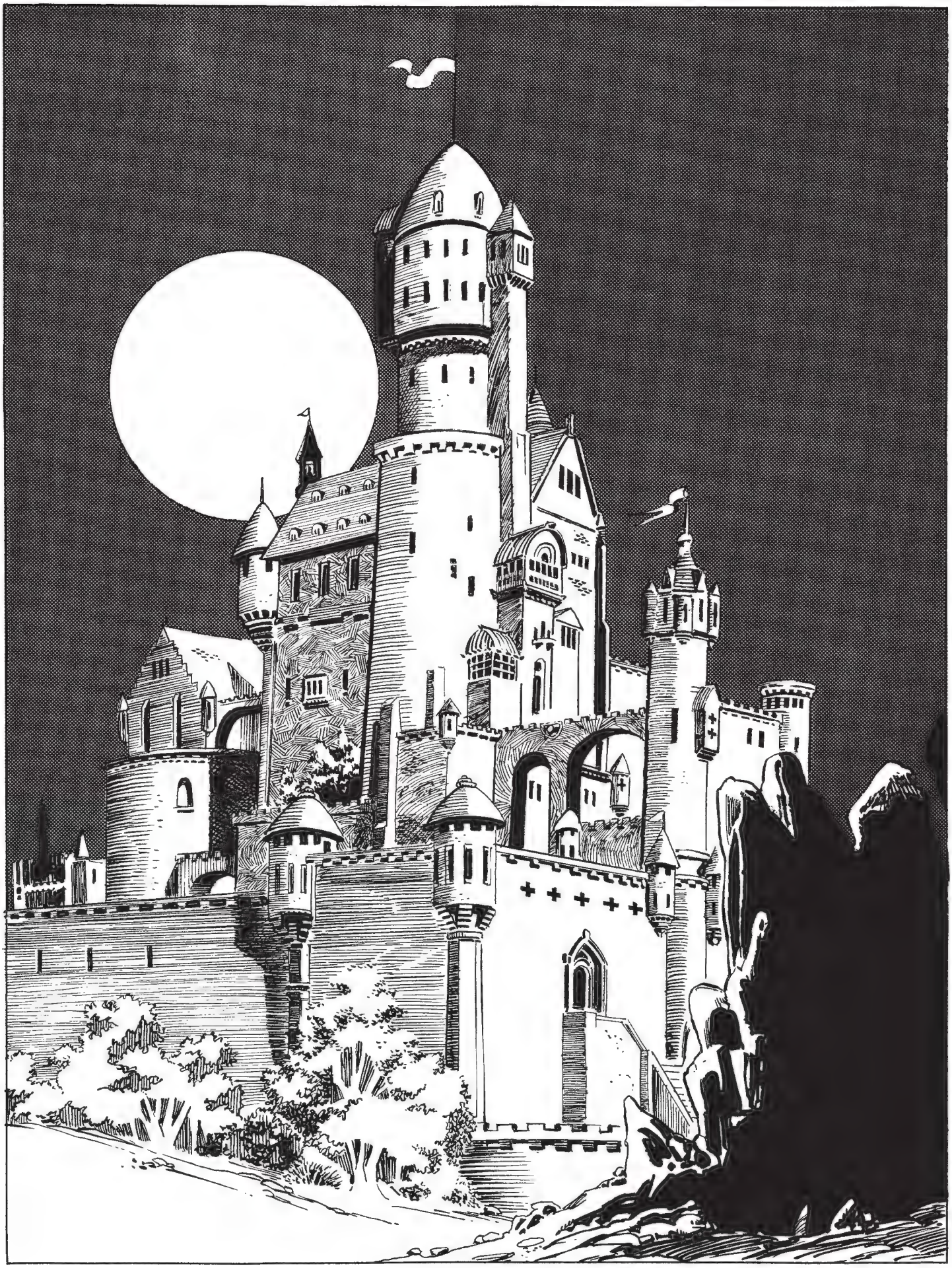

"IT'S A SNARK!" WAS THE SOUND WHICH FIRST CAME THEIR EARS, AND SEEMED ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.
THEN FOLLOWED A TORRENT OF LAUGHTER AND CHEERS:
THEN THE OMINOUS WORDS "IT'S A BOO——"..... THEN SILENCE.
SOME FANCIED THEY HEARD IN THE AIR A WEARY AND WANDERING SIGH THAT SOUNDED LIKE "——JUM," BUT THE OTHERS DECLARE IT WAS ONLY A BREEZE THAT WENT BY.
THEY HUNTED TILL DARKNESS CAME ON, BUT THEY FOUND NOT A BUTTON, OR FEATHER, OR MARK, BY WHICH THEY COULD TELL THAT THEY STOOD ON THE GROUND WHERE THE BAKER HAD MET WITH THE SNARK.
IN THE MIDST OF THE WORD HE WAS TRYING TO SAY, IN THE MIDST OF HIS LAUGHTER AND GLEE, HE HAD SOFTLY AND SUDDENLY VANISHED AWAY——

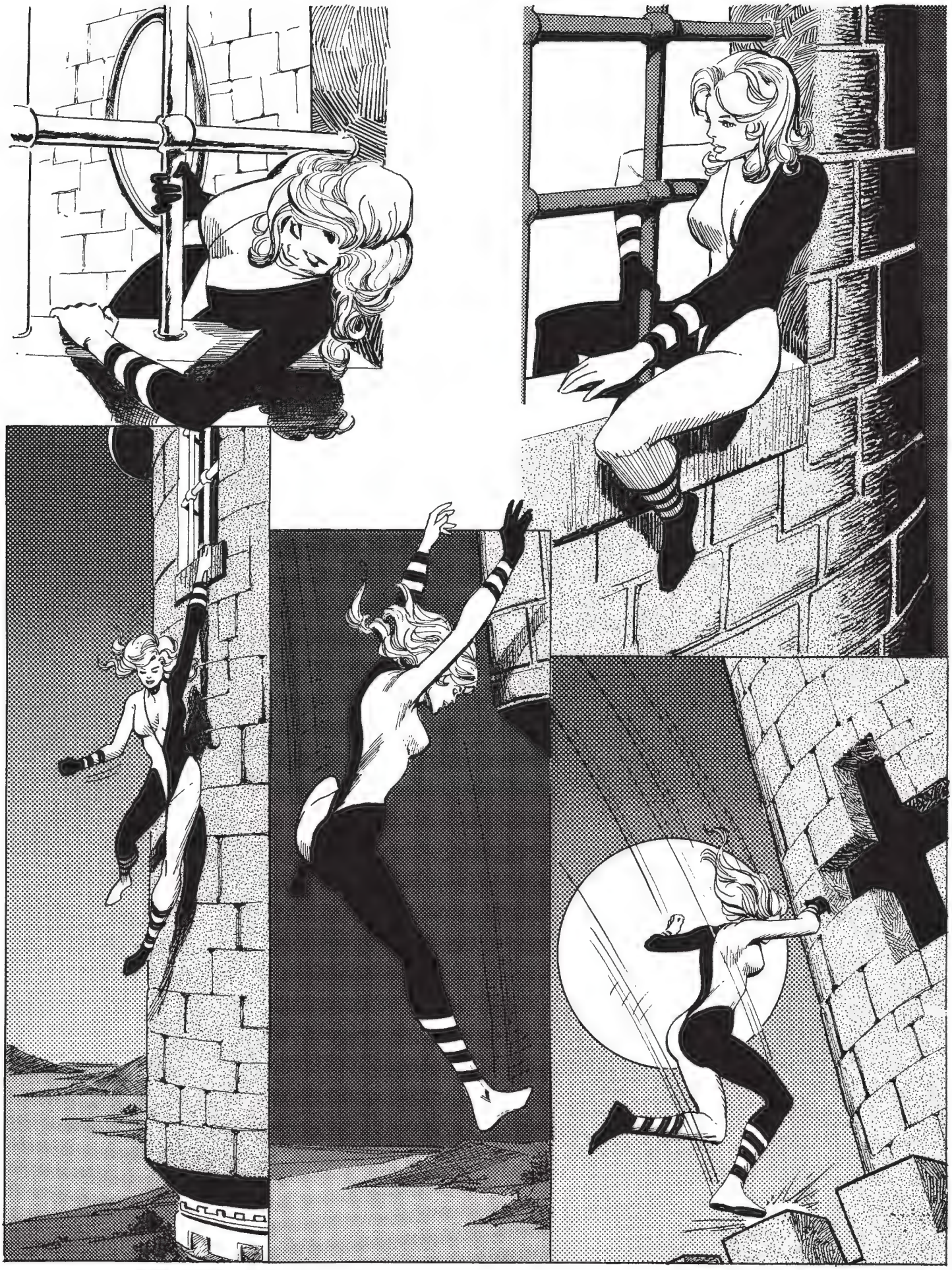

FOR THE SNARK WAS A BOOJUM, YOU SEE.
A GLOSSARY
of terms and usages:
BAKER—(Slang, 21st Cent.) OPERATOR OF A COSMIC FURNACE, SUCH AS THAT POWERING THE BELL.
BANDERSNATCH—A FRIGHTFUL HYBRID.
BANKER—A MACHINE USED FOR NEGOTIATING STEEP GRADES OR UNEVEN TERRAIN.
BARRISTER—A COUNSELOR—HENCE, SLANG FOR AN M.A.P.C. (Mobile All-Purpose Computer)
BEAVER—CANADIAN INDIAN TRIBE. ALSO (Vulger) SLANG FOR FEMININE PUBES.
BELL—INTERSTELLAR SPACESHIP DRIVEN BY COSMIC ENERGY. (So called because of its shape, which resembles a gong or cymbal.)
BELLMAN—COMMANDER OF A BELL. ALSO, ONE WHO ASSISTS DIVERS BY HANDLING LIFELINES.
BILLIARD-MARKER—OBSERVER OF SPHERES AND COLLISIONS; HENCE, A SPACE SCAVENGER.
BONNET—BRITISH VERNACULAR FOR AMERICAN "HOOD," AS APPLIED TO ENGINE COVERS.
BOOJUM—THE DEMATERIALIZED REPLICA OF A SNARK, I.E., A SNARK'S GHOST.
BOOTS—WHAT ELSE? A MAKER OF BONNETS....
BROKER—AGENT.
FINGER—AN EXTENSION.
HO—SHORT FOR "HOLMIUM," A TRIVALENT HAVING UNUSUAL MAGNETIC PROPERTIES AND A PRINCIPAL ELEMENT IN THE COSMIC DRIVE.
JUBJUB—A BIG, HAIRY BIRD OF PREY.
RAILWAY SHARE—A WEAPON CARRIED BY BANKERS, CONSISTING OF ROCKET-DRIVEN BLADES (the share) AND A TRACK (the railway) FOR LAUNCHING THEM.
SALLY—THE BEAVER'S FIRST NAME.
SNARK—AN UNDEFINED TERM...
THIMBLE—A SMALL RECONNAISSANCE CRAFT.

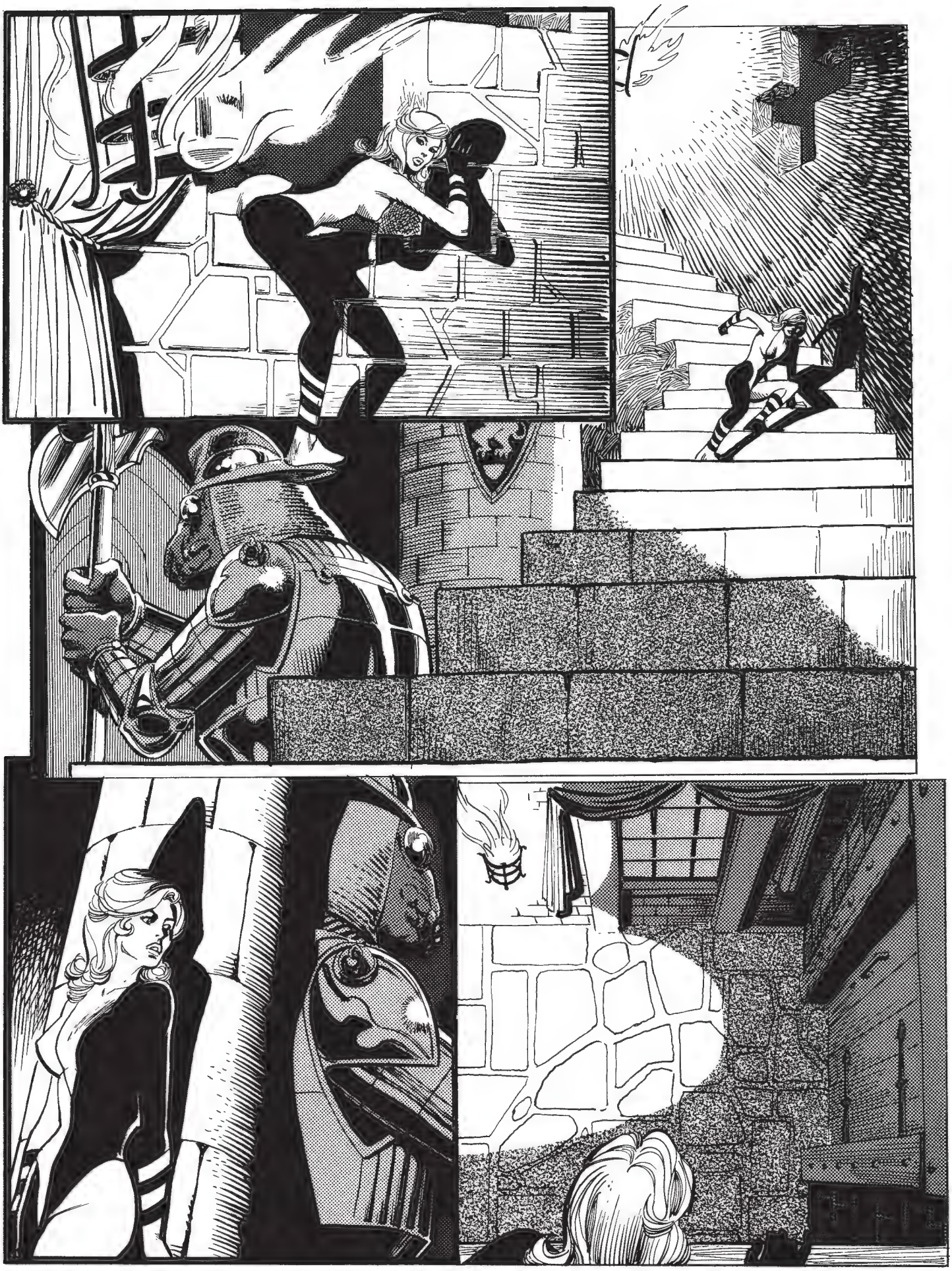

LOST IN A DREAM!
AS REVEALED TO
BILL PEARSON
AUTHOR
AND INTERPRETED BY
DICK GIORDANO
ARTIST
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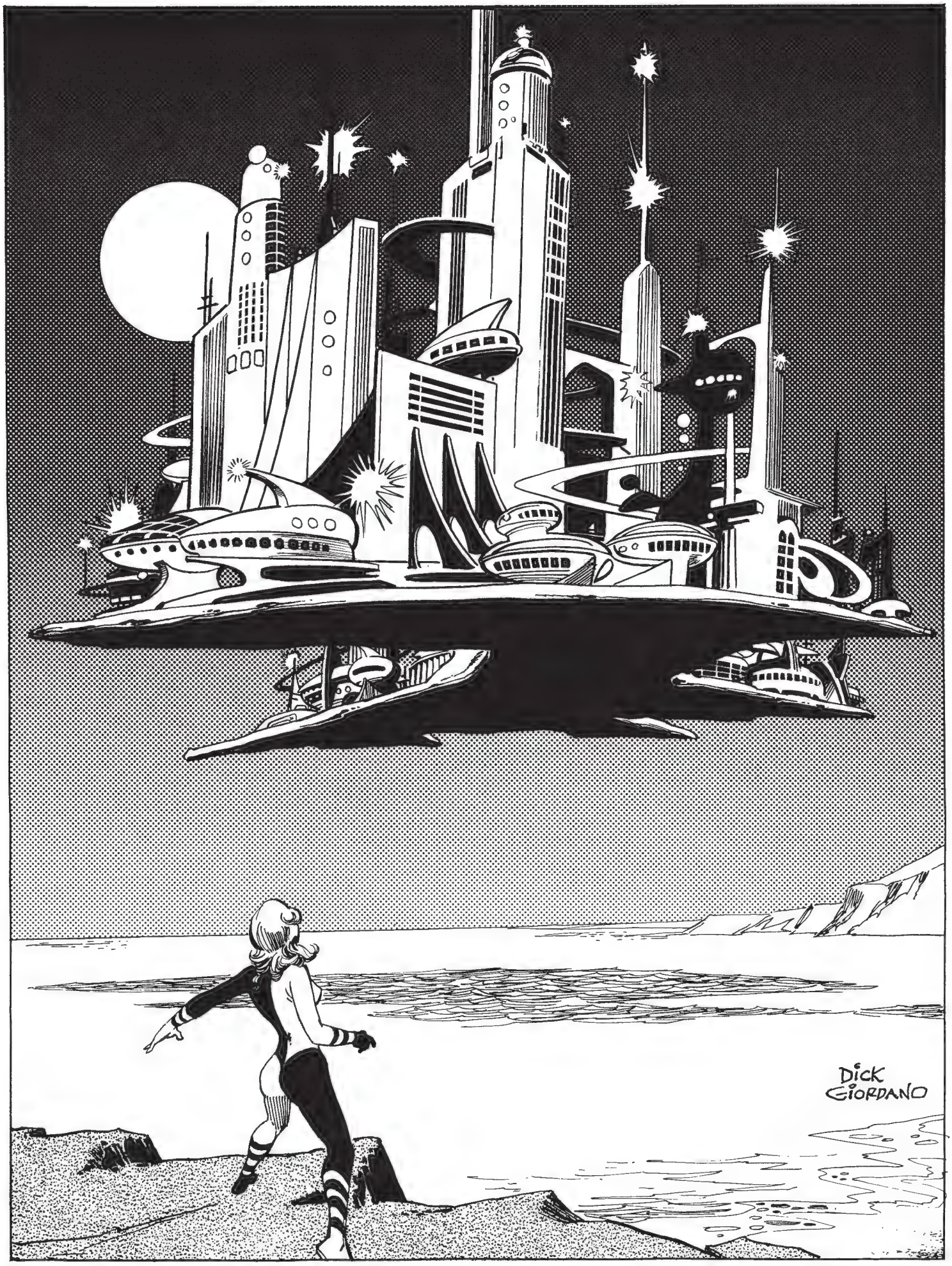








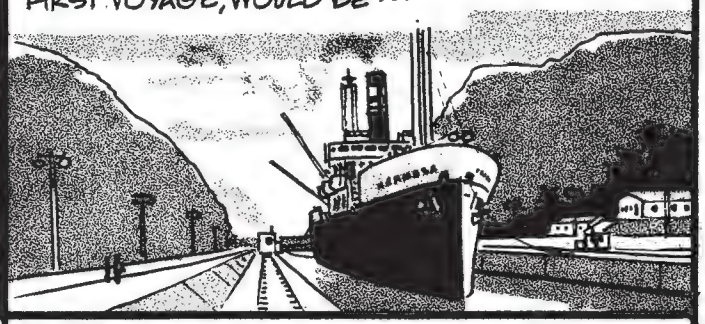



DICK
GIORDANO

39-74

Story by GUYLA and ALEX TOTH ©

1939: TO CELEBRATE ERIC DAMON'S COLLEGE GRADUATION, HIS FATHER BOOKED PASSAGE FOR HIM ON THE SAN FRANCISCO TO NEW YORK RUN OF THE FREIGHTER 'HERMOSA', SKIPPERED BY HIS OLD FRIEND, CAPTAIN NILS OLSON. AT THE TIME, ERIC HAD NO IDEA JUST HOW MEMORABLE THIS, HIS FIRST VOYAGE, WOULD BE ...



CLEARING THE PANAMA CANAL, THE 'HERMOSA' ENTERED THE CARIBBEAN — EVERY MINUTE WAS AN ADVENTURE OF DISCOVERY FOR ERIC AND HIS FIVE FELLOW PASSENGERS ...



MR. AND MRS. DAWSON FROM SEATTLE, AND THE RIGHT REVEREND COLE, HIS WIFE, AND LOVELY DAUGHTER, SUE, WHO OCCUPIED MUCH OF ERIC'S TIME AND THOUGHTS FROM THE START ...

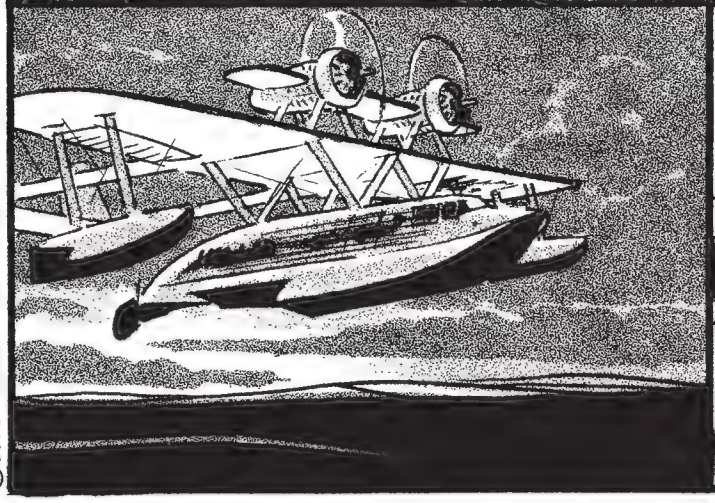


CAPTAIN OLSON KINDLY ATTENDED TO THE COMFORT OF HIS PASSENGERS AND, WHEN DUTIES PERMITTED, DINED WITH THEM IN THE SALON, WHERE HE PROVED TO BE A GRACIOUS HOST AND APT STORYTELLER ...

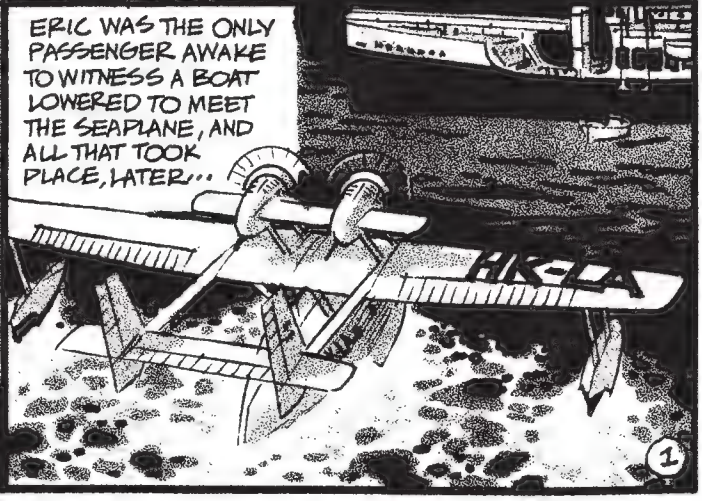


GOOD WEATHER, A CALM SEA, AND STAR-FILLED TROPICAL NIGHTS SPAWNED A RESTFUL VOYAGE. THEN, DURING ONE OF ERIC'S SOLITARY LATE NIGHT DECK STROLLS, SOMETHING QUITE OUT OF THE ORDINARY OCCURRED ... THE SHIP'S ENGINES STOPPED ... AND ...

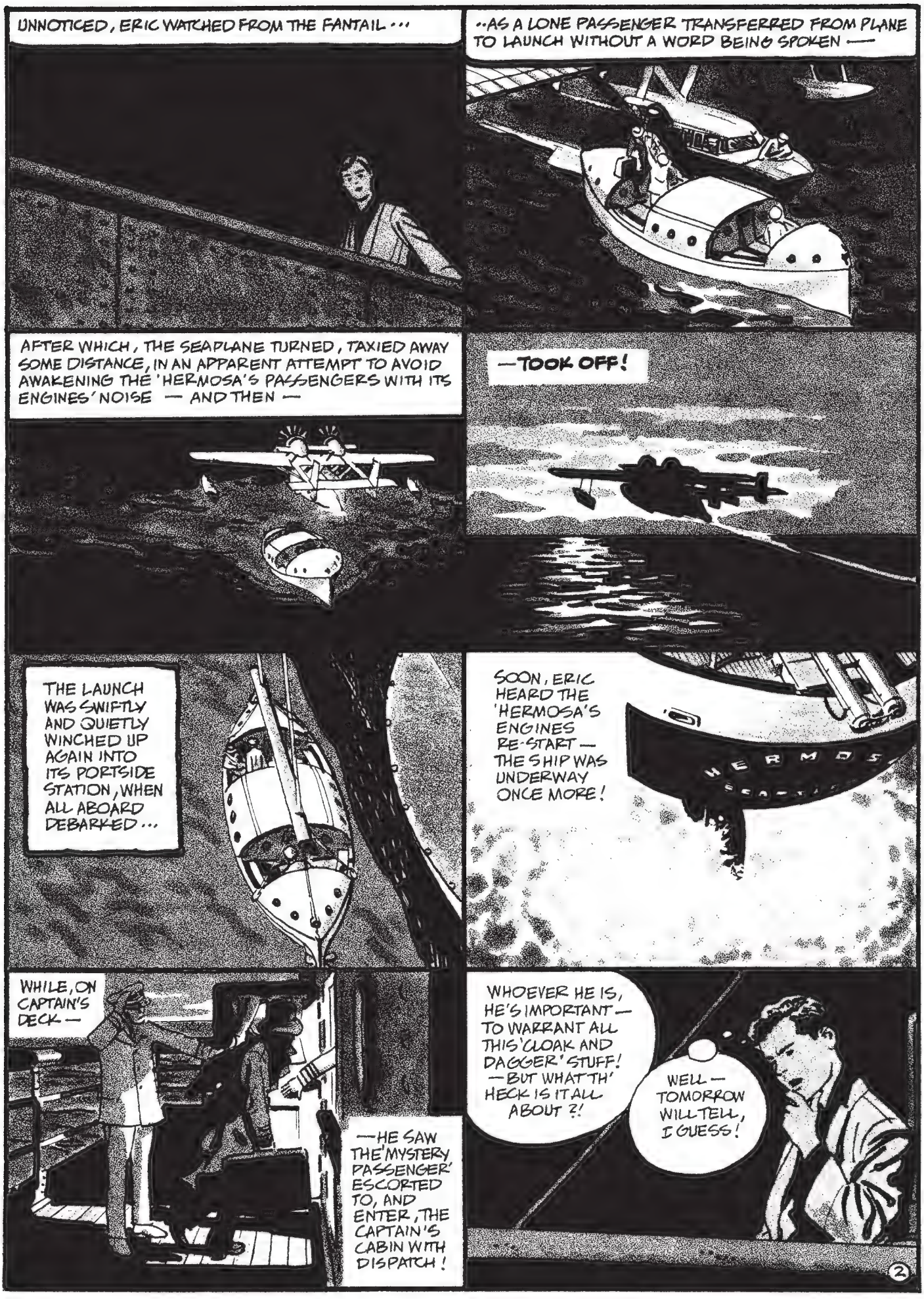




ERIC WAS THE ONLY PASSENGER AWAKE TO WITNESS A BOAT LOWERED TO MEET THE SEAPLANE, AND ALL THAT TOOK PLACE, LATER...



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UNNOTICED, ERIC WATCHED FROM THE FANTAIL ...
..AS A LONE PASSENGER TRANSFERRED FROM PLANE TO LAUNCH WITHOUT A WORD BEING SPOKEN —
AFTER WHICH, THE SEAPLANE TURNED, TAXIED AWAY SOME DISTANCE, IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO AVOID AWAKENING THE 'HERMOSA'S PASSENGERS WITH ITS ENGINES' NOISE — AND THEN —
— TOOK OFF!
THE LAUNCH WAS SWIFTLY AND QUIETLY WINCHED UP AGAIN INTO ITS PORTSIDE STATION, WHEN ALL ABOARD DEBARKED ...
SOON, ERIC HEARD THE 'HERMOSA'S ENGINES RE-START — THE SHIP WAS UNDERWAY ONCE MORE!
WHILE, ON CAPTAIN'S DECK —
— HE SAW THE 'MYSTERY PASSENGER' ESCORTED TO, AND ENTER, THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN WITH DISPATCH!
WHOEVER HE IS, HE'S IMPORTANT — TO WARRANT ALL THIS 'CLOAK AND DAGGER' STUFF! — BUT WHAT TH' HECK IS IT ALL ABOUT?!
WELL — TOMORROW WILL TELL, I GUESS!
2


?
ENROUTE TO HIS CABIN, ERIC CHANCED TO SEE A SHIP'S OFFICER ESCORTING REVEREND AND MRS. COLE, AND SUE, TO THE CAPTAIN'S DECK...
LATER...
I DON'T GET IT— NONE OF IT!
AT 4:53 AM, A RISING WIND SWEPT BLACK CLOUDS ACROSS THE MOON— THE SEAS GREW ROUGH — AND SOON, WIND AND SEA TORE AT EACH OTHER, BOTH ELEMENTS ABOILING, INTO A FULL-FLEDGED TROPICAL STORM!
WHICH TOSSED THE 'HERMOSA' ABOUT LIKE A CORK —
PASSENGERS AND CREW ALIKE WERE CAUGHT UNAWARES BY THE ONSLAUGHT! ERIC WAS TIPPED FROM HIS BUNK!
HEARING THE SCREAMS AND SHOUTS OF HIS FELLOW PASSENGERS WHO MIGHT BE HURT, HE LEFT HIS CABIN IN AN ATTEMPT TO AID THEM...
BUT — THE DECK PITCHED AGAIN — AND...
KRAK
3


WITHIN MINUTES, ON THE BRIDGE...
SIR! INJURY BELOW! THE BOY, ERIC DAMON — UNCONSCIOUS! COULD BE A CONCUSSION!
ERIC? — OH, LORD! TAKE OVER, 'FIRST'! I'M GOING BELOW! BRING THE FIRST AID KIT, DUNSTAN — AND HURRY!
LATER...
RIGHT, DUNSTAN — IT'S CONCUSSION, ALL RIGHT! HAVE 'SPARKS' RADIO U.S. COAST GUARD FOR EMERGENCY PICK-UP AT SEA BY THEIR NEAREST PLANE OR CUTTER JUST AS SOON AS THIS LINE SQUALL BLOWS OVER! THEN COME BACK AND PACK UP ALL OF ERIC'S GEAR FOR THE TRIP! REV. COLE, TEND TO HIM TIL THEN, I MUST RETURN TO THE BRIDGE!
BUT, OUTSIDE, A WILD, RISKY PLAN LEAPT THROUGH CAPT. OLSON'S MIND — BORN OF THIS NEW TURN OF FATE — AND HE PAUSED, TO THINK IT OUT...
YES! BY GEORGE, YES! — IT'S CHANCEY, BUT IT CAN WORK! IT MUST —!!
BEFORE RETURNING TO THE BRIDGE, HE MADE A BRIEF STOP IN HIS CABIN!
MEANWHILE, FOLLOWING IN THE WAKE OF THE LINE SQUALL, A U.S. COAST GUARD AMBULANCE PLANE WAS 'FIXING' THE 'HERMOSA'S POSITION BY RADIO...
I MAKE 20° SSW, IN TEN MINUTES, SIR!
IN THE GRAY PRE-DAWN LIGHT, VISUAL CONTACT WAS MADE — AND SOON...
I'M CAPT. OLSON, SKIPPER — YOUR PATIENT'S NAME IS ERIC DAMON, OF SAN FRANCISCO — AND WE'VE GOT ALL HIS LUGGAGE! MISS GRETA, HERE, WILL FLY IN WITH YOU —!
THANK YOU, CAPT. O-OLSON! GOODBYE!
'BYE!
4


ALL RIGHT, 'FIRST'— BACK TO THE SHIP!
YES, SIR! SORRY!
DAWN OF A NEW DAY BROKE BRIGHT AND CLEAR AS THE 'HERMOSA' GOT UNDERWAY AGAIN! THE EVENTS OF THE LAST SIX HOURS WERE FATED TO BE RECALLED AND RELIVED, BY ALL CONCERNED, MANY YEARS LATER — AND HAPPILY SO...
MIAMI: APRIL, 1974
VIKING LINES
THE PASSENGERS OF THE CARIBBEAN CRUISE SHIP, 'VIKING', ARE FILING ABOARD...
NAME PLEASE, SIR—?
DAMON! ERIC DAMON!
CAST OFF! THE HAPPY-SAD, RAUCOUS MINUTES OF MUSIC, LAUGHTER, CHEERS AND TEARS, 'BON VOYAGE', WAVING ARMS AND CASCADING STREAMERS FILL THE AIR, BROOKING THE WIDENING CHASM TWIXT DOCK AND SHIP —
AND ALL BECOMES MEMORY, AS THE 'VIKING' GLIDES THROUGH THE OUTER CHANNEL — LEADING TO THE SEA!
'WELCOME ABOARD DINNER' AT SIX, FOLLOWED BY COCKTAILS AND ENTERTAINMENT IN THE 'COMPASS ROOM', HOSTED BY A LEATHER-LUNGED COMIC...
— YESSIR, FOLKS! THE 'VIKING'S THE BEST SHIP IN OUR CARIBBEAN FLEET! AND YOU'RE THE BEST AUDIENCE I'VE EVER HAD —
LATER, SPECIAL INTRODUCTIONS TO THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS, AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OF THE SHIP'S NEWLYWEDS, ANNIVERSARY CELEBRANTS; OLDEST AND YOUNGEST, FOREIGN, AND DISTINGUISHED PASSENGERS...
— AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, AS THEY SAY, FOLKS, ARE TWO BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE WHO ARE ABOUT TO CELEBRATE THREE SIMULTANEOUS 'HIS AND HER' EVENTS —! FIRST — THEIR 35TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY! YEAH, LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE 'BIG 35', FOLKS — CRAZY! COOL IT —
5


— SECOND, THE LADY'S BIRTHDAY! THE NUMBER OF WHICH ONLY SHE KNOWS FOR SURE, BUT WON'T TELL, RIGHT? HAHAHA! OKAY —
— THIRD AND LAST 'GOODY' IS HER MAN'S RETIREMENT, AFTER A 45 YEAR CAREER AT SEA — 36 AS CAPTAIN OF COMMERCIAL, WAR, MERCHANT, AND PLEASURE CRUISE SHIPS! IN FACT, HE SERVED 15 OF THOSE YEARS WITH OUR LINE — 5 RIGHT HERE, ON THE 'VIKING'S BRIDGE! HERE HE IS, ON HIS 'BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY' WITH HIS LOVELY LADY, GUESTS OF THE 'VIKING' —
OUR 'SPOTLIGHT COUPLE' OF THIS CRUISE, FOLKS —
— CAPTAIN AND MRS. NILS OLSON!
LET'S HEAR IT —!
YEAH!
GREAT COUPLE!
ACROSS THE ROOM —
CAPTAIN OLSON?!!
AS THE SHOW ENDS, THE DANCE BAND STRIKES UP...
EXCUSE ME, MR. AND MRS. TODD —
— I'D LIKE TO RENEW AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE!
OF COURSE, MR. DAMON! SAM WAS JUST ABOUT TO ASK ME TO DANCE, WEREN'T YOU, DEAR?
CAPTAIN OLSON?
MM? — YES?
IT HAS BEEN 35 YEARS SINCE WE MET ABOARD THE 'HERMOSA' — BUT I'M —
GOOD LORD! GRETA!
IT'S HIM!
ERIC DAMON!!!
ERIC! ERIC!
I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S REALLY YOU! YOU LOOK MARVELOUS! COME, LET'S TALK —!
WHAT A GRAND SURPRISE TO FIND YOU — HERE, OF ALL PLACES!


ERIC, MEET GRETA — MY WIFE!
HELLO AGAIN, ERIC —
YOU'VE MATURED HANDSOMELY — BUT I'M STILL FURIOUS WITH YOU .. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!
"AGAIN"?
"FURIOUS"? WITH ME?
— I'M AFRAID I DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND, GRETA!
NONE OF US WILL, OVER THIS MUSIC — LET'S GO!
ON DECK ...
NOW WILL YOU EXPLAIN, GRETA?
HAHA — ALL RIGHT! YOU'RE THE YOUNG MAN WHO, WITH THE HELP OF A STORM AT SEA, RUINED OUR HONEYMOON — FOR STARTERS!
I-I DID THAT?!
BUT .. WE'VE NEVER EVEN MET BEFORE, GRETA!
HE'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW, GRETA! WE'LL JUST HAVE TO UNRAVEL THIS 35 YEAR OLD MYSTERY FOR THE POOR FELLA! BUT, HONEYMOON OR NO, ERIC — AS YOU CAN SEE — IT ALL WORKED OUT ALL RIGHT FOR US!
4
HIGH ABOVE TOP DECK, IN THE 'COMPASS LOUNGE' ...
TWO DUBONNÉTS AND A SCOTCH, FEDDY!
SI — CAPT. OLSON!
NOW THEN, ERIC — TO FIT ALL THE MISSING PIECES INTO THE PUZZLE FOR YOU ...
GRETA AND I MET AND FELL IN LOVE IN THE SPRING OF 1937, WHILE SHE WAS PASSENGER ON THE 'HERMOSA'! A GERMAN, SHE'D BEEN VISITING HER RELATIVES IN NEW YORK BEFORE SAILING ON MY SHIP, AS A VACATION — PRIOR TO HER RETURN HOME ...
I WANTED TO MARRY HER IN SAN FRANCISCO — BUT SHE FELT IT ONLY PROPER TO RETURN TO GERMANY, TO ASK HER FATHER'S PERMISSION, PERSONALLY; SETTLE HER AFFAIRS — AND THEN COME BACK TO THE STATES! — I SAW HER OFF ON THE 'HINDENBURG' ...
NEITHER ONE OF US COULD KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE TWO YEARS BEFORE WE'D SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN ...
7


HER JOY TURNED TO SORROW AND FEAR WHEN SHE WAS TOLD BY FRIENDS THAT HER FATHER'S ANTI-NAZI SENTIMENTS HAD RESULTED IN HIS ARREST BY THE GESTAPO! MONTHS WENT BY WITHOUT A WORD, DESPITE HER INQUIRIES! HE MIGHT HAVE ALREADY DIED AT THEIR HANDS — BUT —
SHE WOULD NOT LEAVE! HOPING HE MIGHT BE ALIVE, AND FREED!
THEN - SIX MONTHS LATER — WHEN THE GESTAPO CAME BACK, THEY CAME FOR HER!
HER 'INTERROGATION' LASTED TWO WEEKS! WHEN SHE WAS 'BROKEN' AND THEY RELEASED HER, THEY SAID: " WE'RE FINISHED WITH YOUR FATHER, TOO — HE'S WAITING FOR YOU TO TAKE HIM HOME — "
— IN THERE!
FATHER!!
THE LAST CRUEL BLOW HAD BEEN STRUCK...
IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER! HER MIND SNAPPED! FRIENDS TOOK HER IN, SAW TO HER FATHER'S BURIAL — AND READ HER MY LETTERS, TO HELP HER! TIME PASSED...
IT WAS 1938! GERMANY'S RAPE OF EUROPE WAS UNDERWAY! WAR WITH FRANCE AND ENGLAND WAS IMMINENT! IT WAS JULY BEFORE GRETA WAS WELL ENOUGH TO WRITE ME — AND, BY THEN, I'D WORKED OUT A PLAN TO GET HER OUT OF THERE, AND BACK TO ME —
U.S. IMMIGRATION HAD TIGHTENED ENTRY QUOTAS FOR GERMANS — BUT SOUTH AMERICA HAD NOT! IF I COULD ARRANGE FOR GRETA'S PASSAGE THERE, THEN MY PLAN HAD A CHANCE — RISKY, OR NOT...
AUGUST, '38: I WIRED GRETA CASH AND TRAVEL INSTRUCTIONS! SHE SECURED PROPER VISAS, BOOKED PASSAGE FOR VENEZUELA, AND LEFT HER HOMELAND WITH NOTHING BUT ONE SUITCASE, DREAD MEMORIES — AND A GLIMMER OF HOPE...
8

I'D JUST BEEN MADE CAPTAIN OF THE 'HERMOSA' WHEN GRETA CABLED ME OF HER SAFE ARRIVAL IN CARACAS! IT WAS TIME NOW FOR THE NEXT STEP IN MY PLAN – I NEEDED A SEAPLANE TO DO THE JOB – AND, TOO, THE DISCRETION OF MY FIRST AND SECOND MATES!

AS YOU KNOW, ERIC, THE 'HERMOSA'S RUN WAS WEST TO EAST COAST AND BACK VIA THE PANAMA CANAL — CLOSE ENOUGH TO VENEZUELA FOR A MEDIUM-RANGE SEAPLANE TO RENDEZVOUS WITH US AT SEA AND RETURN — BUT THE JOB HAD TO BE DONE AT **NIGHT!** — WHEN PASSENGERS WERE ASLEEP..

YOU MEAN – THAT **NIGHT** – **THAT PLANE** – AND THE LONE PASSENGER THAT **I** – ?!?

ERIC! WERE **YOU AWAKE** THAT NIGHT – ?!

YES, ON AFT DECK! COULDN'T SLEEP –

BUT THEN – ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT **GRETA** WAS –

THE 'MAN' IN THE SEA-PLANE? **YES** –

NILS HAD ME HIRE A LOCAL CHARTER AIR SERVICE TO FLY ME OUT ON A NIGHT WHEN A CALM SEA AND A FULL MOON WOULD ALLOW US A SAFE LANDING! AT LAST, HE WIRED US HIS CHOICE OF THE NIGHT, HIS SHIP'S POSITION, AND THE HOUR – 2:00 AM – FOR OUR RENDEZVOUS ...

IN THE EVENT THAT I'D BE SEEN, I WAS TO WEAR MEN'S CLOTHES WHEN I CAME ABOARD! THE PILOTS WERE PAID WELL FOR THEIR FLIGHT AND THEIR DISCRETION — AND, EXCEPT FOR YOUR NIGHT-OWL OBSERVATION OF US THAT NIGHT – ALL WENT WELL, AND UNDETECTED — NILS AND I WERE TOGETHER!

BUT – WAIT A MINUTE! I LATER SAW REVEREND COLE, HIS WIFE, AND SUE BEING BROUGHT UP TO YOUR CABIN, CAPTAIN – !

YOU **SEE**, GRETA? HE SAW IT **ALL** – **EVERYTHING!**

WHY?

YES – HAHA! WELL NOW, I **HAD** COME HALF-WAY 'ROUND THE WORLD TO BE WITH NILS – HADN'T I ?

YES – !

– AND TO **MARRY HIM**, REMEMBER –

– WELL, HAVING A **MINISTER** ABOARD WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! HE WAS SWEET, AND MARRIED US AT ONCE, WITH HIS WIFE AND GIRL 'WITNESSING' FOR US!

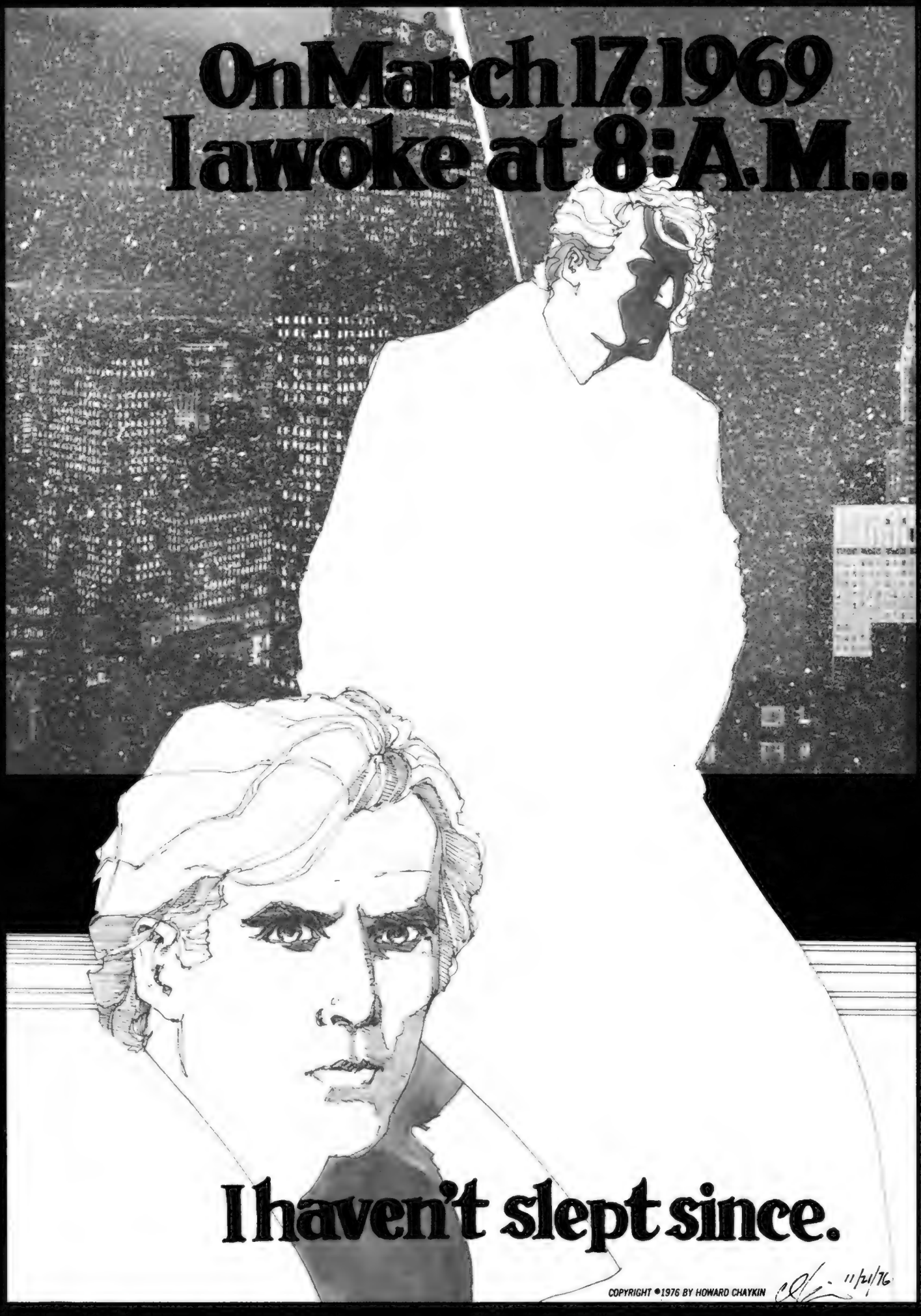
– AND PROMISING US THEIR SECRECY!

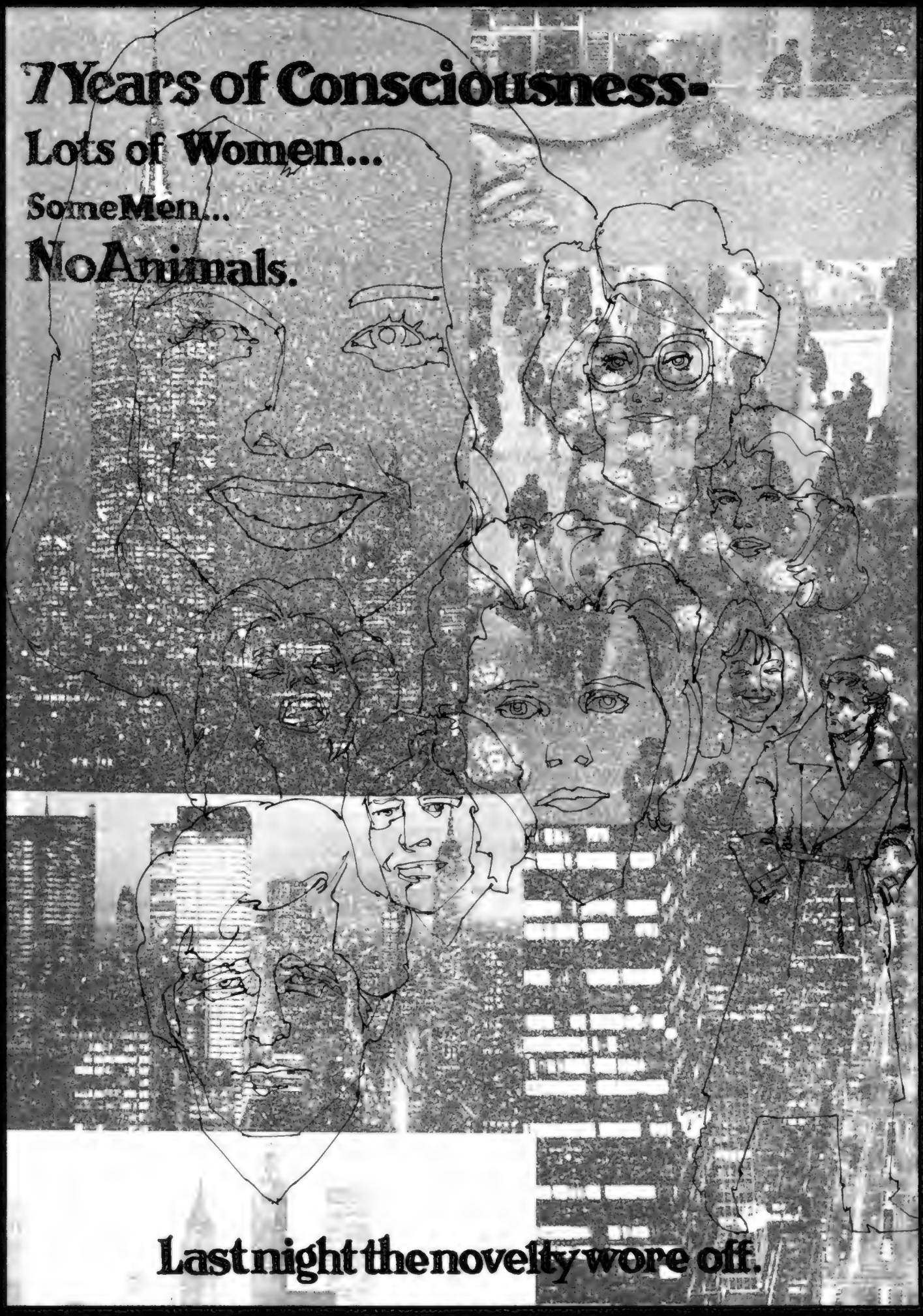
GREAT SCOTT! SO THAT WAS IT! BUT –

YES, ERIC – 'BUT' **INDEED!** THERE WE WERE, AFTER TWO YEARS.. TOGETHER AGAIN –

– AND LEGALLY WED IN THE EYES OF CHURCH AND MARITIME LAW – ! NILS, AS CAPTAIN, WROTE OUT THE LICENSE, THEN ENTERED IT IN THE SHIP'S LOG! IT WAS **HONEYMOON TIME!** WELL, **ALMOST!** –


THE STORM FIXED THAT IN SHORT ORDER! AND THEN, YOUR CONCUSSION, ERIC—!
IS 35 YEARS TOO LATE FOR ME TO EXTEND MY APOLOGIES FOR HAVING TOO THIN A SKULL?
OR I, FOR THE 'HERMOSA'S TOO-THICK BULKHEADS, ERIC?
NOW TELL ME HOW YOU'D PLANNED TO GET GRETA OFF THE SHIP, PAST THE OFFICIALS, IN NEW YORK?
I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BRAZEN IT OUT WITH 'IMMIGRATION', THERE! SHE WAS MY WIFE - AMERICAN BY MARRIAGE! GERMANS WERE NOT YET LISTED AS 'ENEMY' OR 'UNDESIRABLE' ALIENS! THAT CAME WITH THE WAR, IN 1942!
I MIGHT ADD, ALSO, THAT SHE WAS THE MOST 'DESIRABLE' ALIEN I'D EVER MET! EH, GRETA?
LIEBE SCHATZI, NILS!
BUT YOU STILL HAD ALL THE REST OF THE VOYAGE TO NEW YORK FOR YOUR HONEYMOON—!
NO, ERIC! — BUT THEN HOW COULD YOU KNOW? YOU WERE 'OUT' COLD.. UNCONSCIOUS!
YOU NEEDED HOSPITAL CARE! WHEN I RADIOED THE COAST GUARD TO TAKE YOU OFF THE SHIP, IT STRUCK ME THAT THEY COULD TAKE GRETA WITH YOU, AS A CONCERNED PASSENGER; RIGHT TO THE HOSPITAL! —
— WHERE, ONCE SHE KNEW YOU WERE OKAY, SHE COULD JUST WALK OUT, AND HEAD FOR NEW YORK, TO STAY WITH HER RELATIVES UNTIL I PUT INTO PORT THERE A FEW WEEKS LATER—!
AND I DID, ERIC—
— I HATED LEAVING NILS, POSTPONING OUR HONEYMOON, BUT HE INSISTED! THEY'D PACKED UP YOUR BAGS — I PUT MINE WITH THEM — AND OFF WE FLEW
— TO A TEXAS CITY — WACO, YES! CITY HOSPITAL! THE DOCTOR SAID YOU'D BE FINE —
— SOON, I WAS ON A TRAIN BOUND FOR NEW YORK, FAMILY, FREEDOM, AND A LIFE WITH NILS!
AND THAT, ERIC, IS HOW YOU RUINED THE HONEY-MOON OF A LADY YOU'D NEVER MET!
THE HEADACHE WAS PUNISHMENT BEFITTING THE CRIME, GRETA, BELIEVE ME! IT WAS WEEKS BEFORE I WAS FIT TO TRAVEL HOME! DAD DIED ABOUT THREE MONTHS LATER — AND I JOINED THE R.C.A.F. AND THE 'BATTLE FOR BRITAIN'!
I TRIED TO LOCATE YOU AFTER THE WAR, NILS — BUT FAILED!
I HAD NO IDEA OF THE COMPLICATIONS INVOLVING WHAT I SAW THAT NIGHT, MY CRACK ON THE HEAD, AND ALL! SAY, YOU TWO — THIS TRIP WOULDN'T BE ANOTHER OF YOUR HONEYMOONS, WOULD IT?
YES IT IS, ERIC; AND IF YOU DARE TO RUIN THIS ONE TOO — I'LL HAVE NILS MAKE YOU WALK THE PLANK!
BUT NOW TELL US ABOUT YOU!
ME—? I'M A 57 YEAR OLD MYSTERY-WRITER WHO'S ABOUT TO BID GOODNIGHT TO YOU, RETIRE TO MY CABIN — AND MY PORTABLE — AND START WRITING ABOUT A 35 YEAR OLD MYSTERY AT SEA! THE PLOT OF WHICH NO ONE WILL EVER BELIEVE, I'M SURE!
HAPPY HONEY-MOON!
CALM SEAS!
SEE YOU AT BRUNCH
END

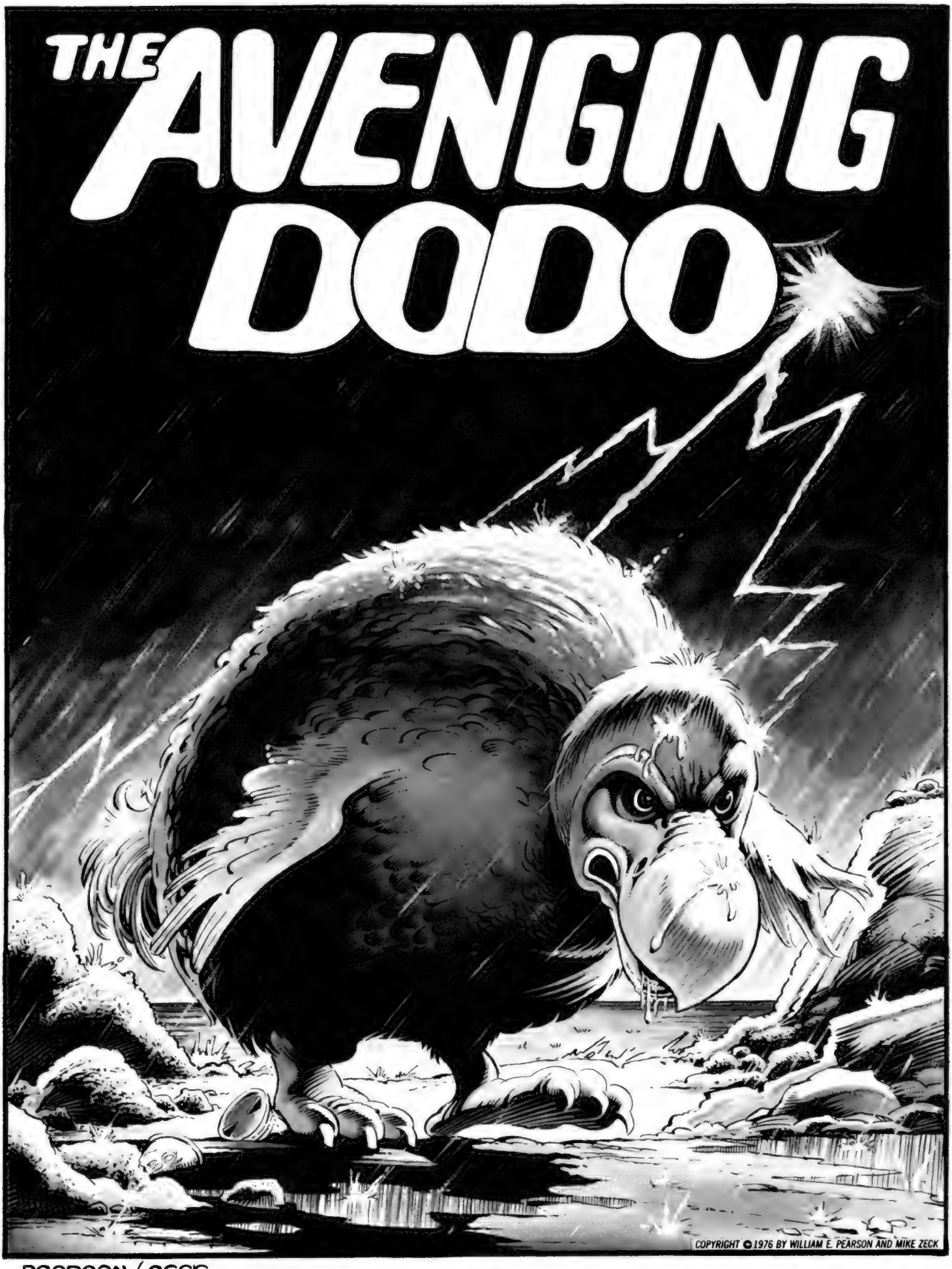

On March 17, 1969
I awoke at 8:A.M...
I haven't slept since.
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7 Years of Consciousness-
Lots of Women...
Some Men...
No Animals.
Last night the novelty wore off.

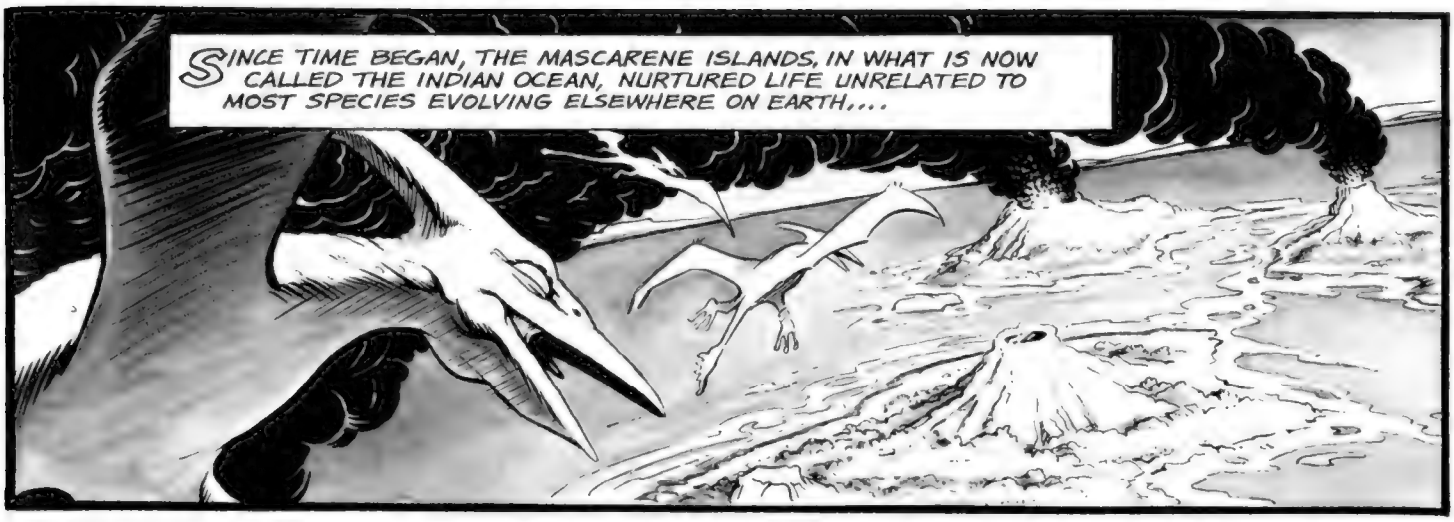

So I tried something new.
The only thing is...
What happens when I get bored with this?

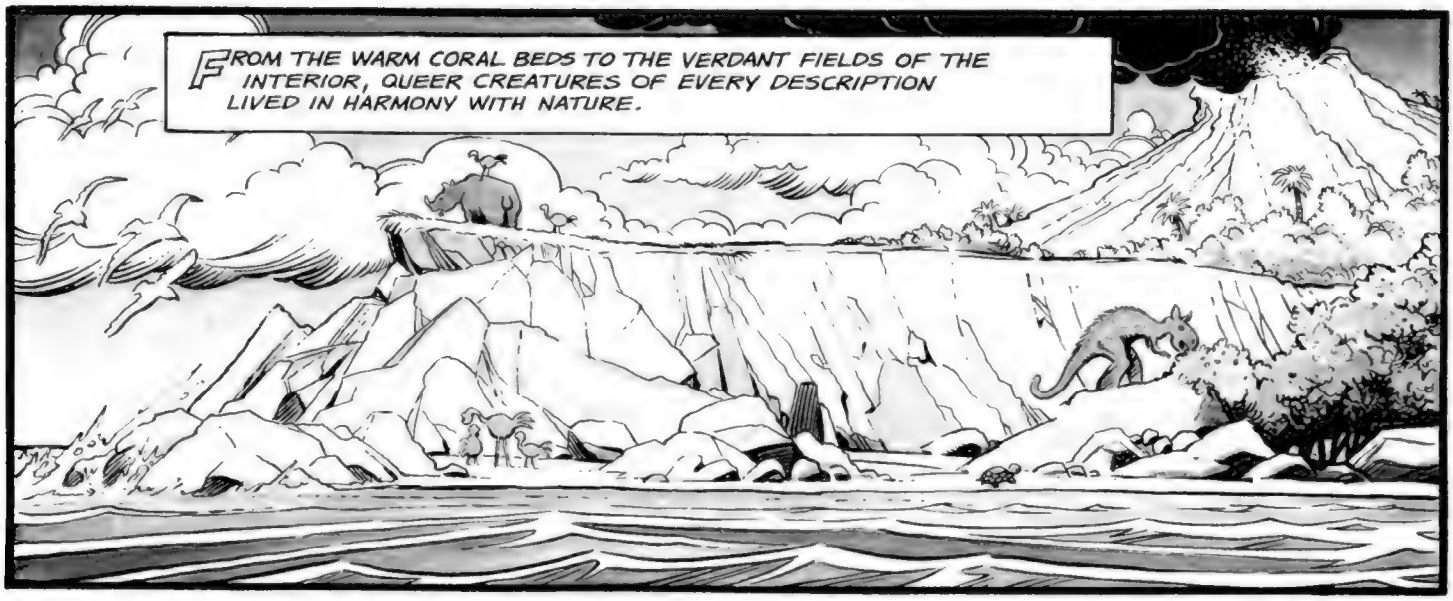

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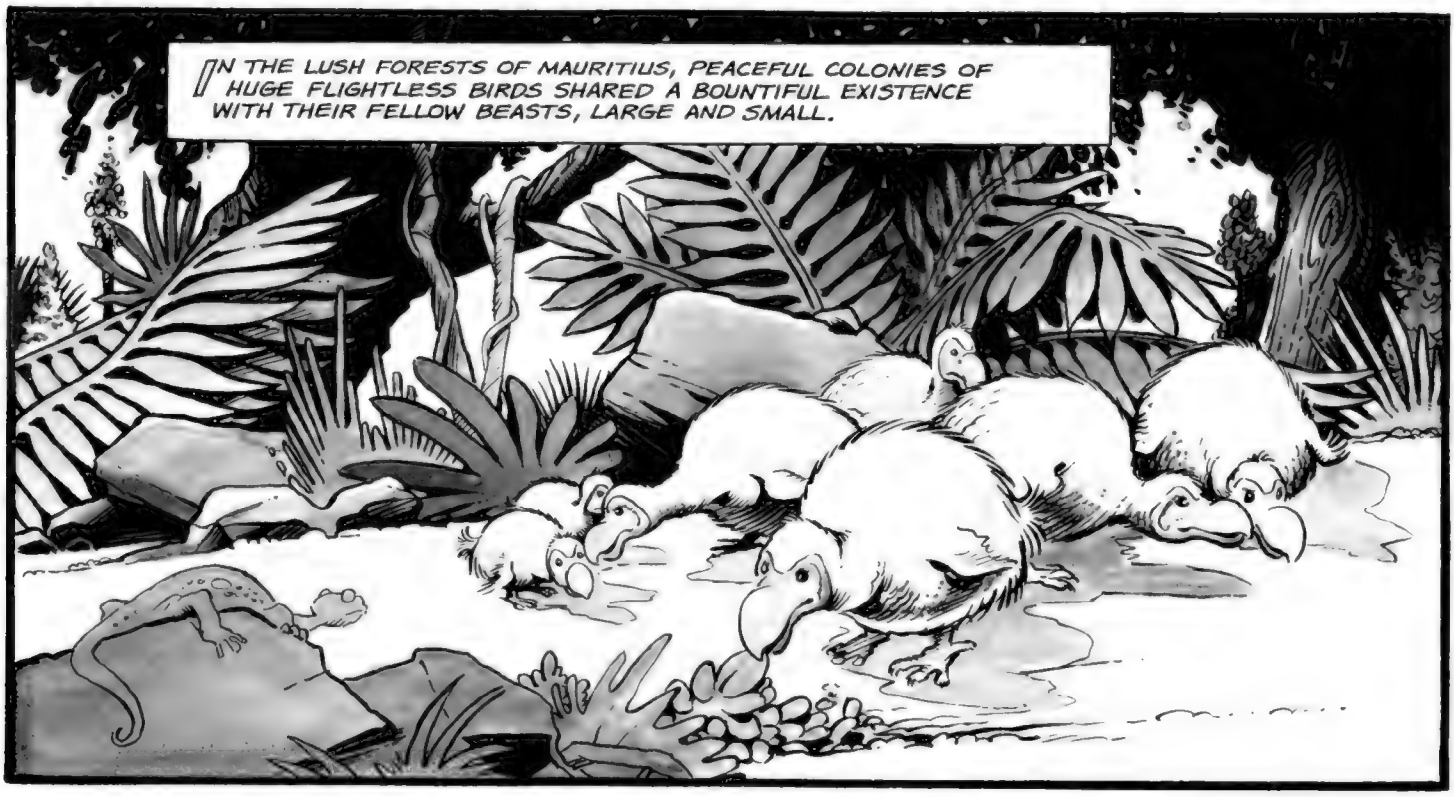

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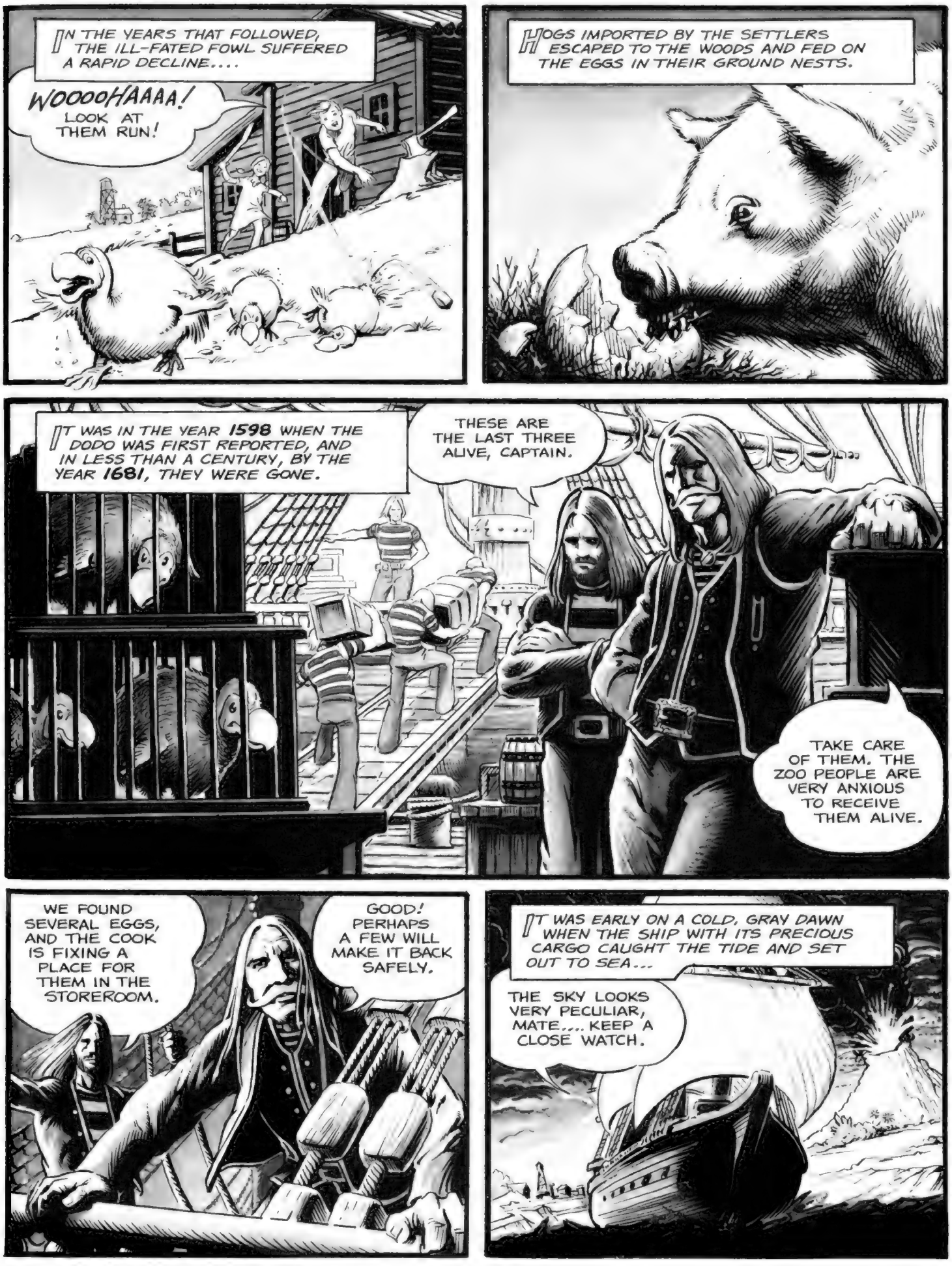
PEARSON / ZECK


SINCE TIME BEGAN, THE MASCARENE ISLANDS, IN WHAT IS NOW CALLED THE INDIAN OCEAN, NURTURED LIFE UNRELATED TO MOST SPECIES EVOLVING ELSEWHERE ON EARTH....

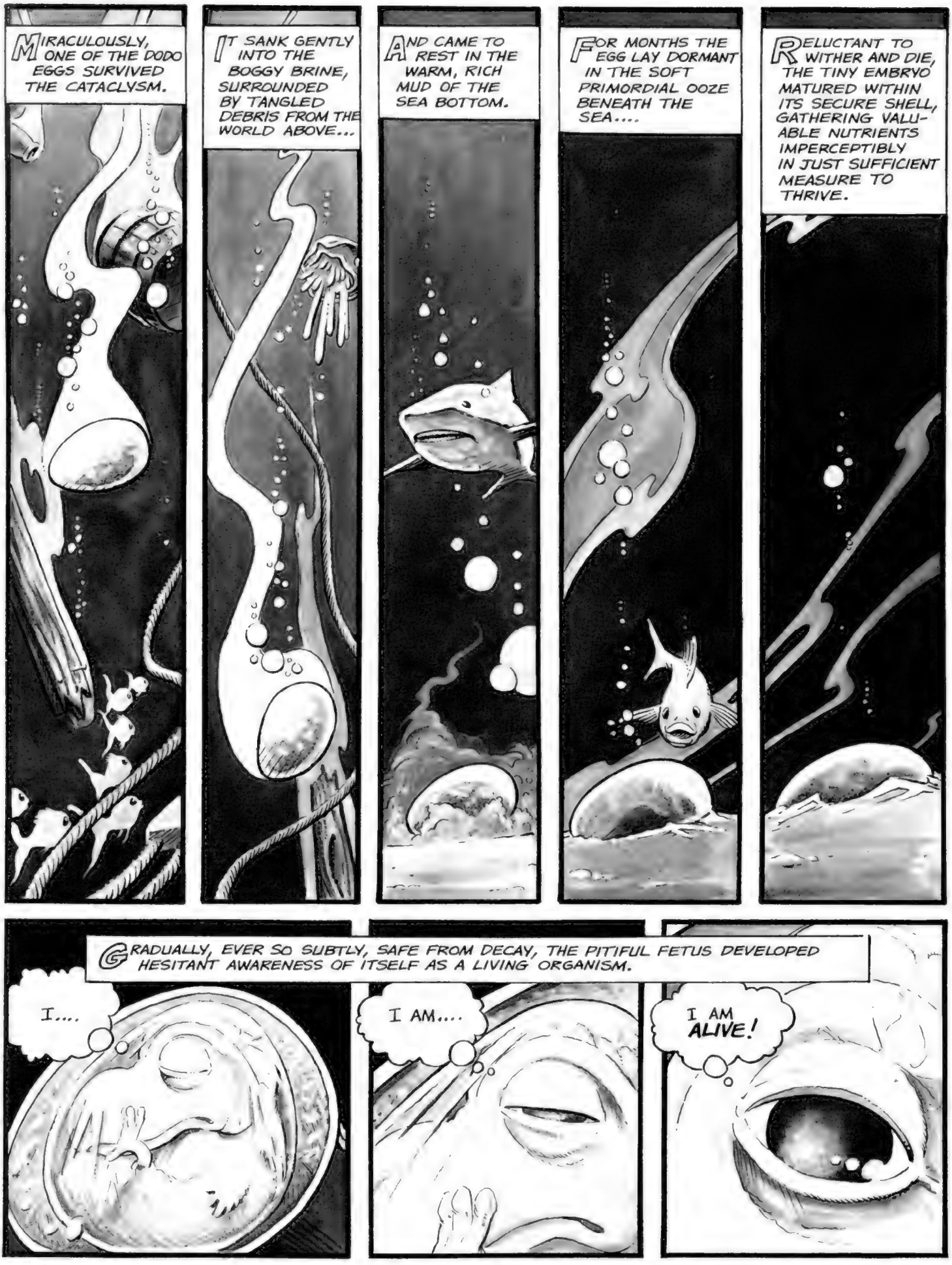

FROM THE WARM CORAL BEDS TO THE VERDANT FIELDS OF THE INTERIOR, QUEER CREATURES OF EVERY DESCRIPTION LIVED IN HARMONY WITH NATURE.


IN THE LUSH FORESTS OF MAURITIUS, PEACEFUL COLONIES OF HUGE FLIGHTLESS BIRDS SHARED A BOUNTIFUL EXISTENCE WITH THEIR FELLOW BEASTS, LARGE AND SMALL.


THEN CAME.... MEN!
IT'S A PARADISE, CAPTAIN.
I CLAIM THESE ISLANDS FOR THE REPUBLIC OF THE NETHERLANDS, IN THE NAME OF MAURICE OF NASSAU, SON OF WILLIAM THE SILENT, GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF!
WE'LL STAY LONG ENOUGH TO BUILD A FORT, THEN RETURN TO AMSTERDAM FOR VOLUNTEERS TO SETTLE PERMANENTLY.
LOOK AT THE FUNNY BIRDS!
WHAT ARE THEY, TURKEYS?
HO HO HO! LIKE NO TURKEYS I EVER SAW!
THEY'VE GOT WINGS, BUT THEY CAN'T EVEN GET OFF THE GROUND!
HA HA!
THE STRANGE CREATURES WERE CALLED "DODOS" BY THE SAILORS WHO USED THEM FOR TARGET PRACTICE.
PFWAM
GOT 'IM! LOOK AT THE FOOL THING TWITCH!
THEY WERE NOT GOOD TO EAT, BUT FUN TO SHOOT AND WATCH DIE.
BRING THE BIG ONE, HANS. WE'LL SELL IT AS A CURIOSITY BACK HOME.

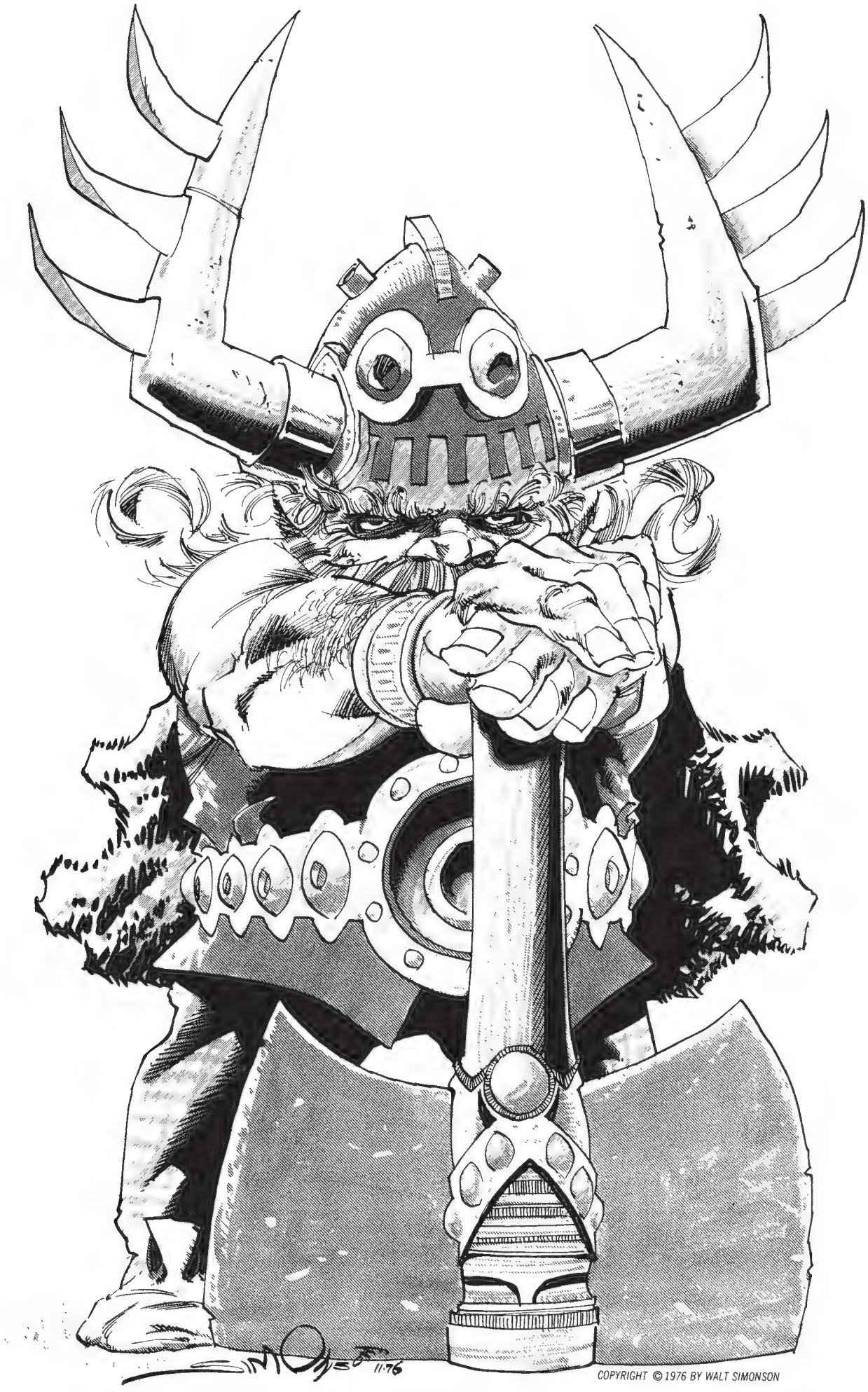

IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, THE ILL-FATED FOWL SUFFERED A RAPID DECLINE....
WOOOOHAAAA! LOOK AT THEM RUN!
HOGS IMPORTED BY THE SETTLERS ESCAPED TO THE WOODS AND FED ON THE EGGS IN THEIR GROUND NESTS.
IT WAS IN THE YEAR 1598 WHEN THE DODO WAS FIRST REPORTED, AND IN LESS THAN A CENTURY, BY THE YEAR 1681, THEY WERE GONE.
THESE ARE THE LAST THREE ALIVE, CAPTAIN.
TAKE CARE OF THEM. THE ZOO PEOPLE ARE VERY ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE THEM ALIVE.
WE FOUND SEVERAL EGGS, AND THE COOK IS FIXING A PLACE FOR THEM IN THE STOREROOM.
GOOD! PERHAPS A FEW WILL MAKE IT BACK SAFELY.
IT WAS EARLY ON A COLD, GRAY DAWN WHEN THE SHIP WITH ITS PRECIOUS CARGO CAUGHT THE TIDE AND SET OUT TO SEA...
THE SKY LOOKS VERY PECULIAR, MATE.... KEEP A CLOSE WATCH.


THE VOLCANIC CRATERS IN THE INTERIOR HAD SIMMERED QUIETLY FOR EONS, BUT THEY BOILED SUDDENLY TO BLINDING LIFE, ALMOST AS THOUGH THE OLD ISLAND GODS WERE OFFENDED BY THE ABRUPT EXTINCTION OF THEIR UNIQUE INHABITANTS.
WILL THE COLONISTS BE SAFE?!
TO HELL WITH THE COLONISTS! LOOK AT THAT WAVE!
THE SHIP SKIMMED THE HORIZON, THEN FLIPPED OVER LIKE A CHILD'S TOY AND SPIRALED TO THE DEPTHS IN A FIERCE UNDERTOW!
SO SEVERE WERE THE CONVULSIVE ERUPTIONS THAT A GIANT RIFT SLICED THE EARTH BENEATH THE WATER, AND THE SHIP BECAME SPLINTERS OF REFUSE.


MIRACULOUSLY, ONE OF THE DODO EGGS SURVIVED THE CATACLYSM.
IT SANK GENTLY INTO THE BOGGY BRINE, SURROUNDED BY TANGLED DEBRIS FROM THE WORLD ABOVE...
AND CAME TO REST IN THE WARM, RICH MUD OF THE SEA BOTTOM.
FOR MONTHS THE EGG LAY DORMANT IN THE SOFT PRIMORDIAL OOZE BENEATH THE SEA....
RELUCTANT TO WITHER AND DIE, THE TINY EMBRYO MATURED WITHIN ITS SECURE SHELL, GATHERING VALUABLE NUTRIENTS IMPERCEPTIBLY IN JUST SUFFICIENT MEASURE TO THRIVE.
GRADUALLY, EVER SO SUBTLY, SAFE FROM DECAY, THE PITIFUL FETUS DEVELOPED HESITANT AWARENESS OF ITSELF AS A LIVING ORGANISM.
I....
I AM....
I AM ALIVE!


FOR CENTURIES THE DODO DEVELOPED IN THE MURKY MUCK, OBLIVIOUS TO THE FAINT IMPRESSIONS FROM THE FRANTIC, FRIVOLOUS, SHORT-LIVED ORGANISMS SURROUNDING IT....
FEEDING ITS ONLY ENERGY CONSUMING ORGAN... ITS BRAIN!
HAVING NOTHING EXTERNALLY TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH, THE DODO'S BRAIN DUG DEEP INTO ITS MEMORY, THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF HIS SPECIES.... A SPECIES THAT HAD EXISTED FOR THOUSANDS OF GENERATIONS BEFORE MANKIND CAME ALONG AND MISNAMED THEM DODOS.
FOR IF ONLY THEY'D CARED TO INVESTIGATE, THEY'D HAVE CERTAINLY DISCOVERED THAT THE DODO HAD AN EXCEPTIONALLY FINE MIND.... IN FACT, A MIND OF EXTRAORDINARY TELEPATHIC EMPATHY.... AN INBORN, VIVID MEMORY OF ITS ENTIRE EVOLUTIONARY PATH!
AND THE LONGER THE DODO DELIBERATED ON THE DASTARDLY DEMISE OF HIS DOOMED DODO ANCESTORS, THE MADDER HE GOT.
BY THE TIME THE DODO WAS 300 YEARS OLD, IT WAS THE SMARTEST DODO THAT HAD EVER BEEN BORN, AND IT HADN'T EVEN BEEN BORN YET!


COINCIDENTALLY, JUST ABOUT THAT TIME, THE HUGE PLATES BENEATH THE SEA SHIFTED AGAIN, AND THE LAST FERTILE DODO EGG SHOT TO THE SURFACE, LIKE A MISSILE FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL!
AND CAME TO REST, BOBBING UNEASILY OFF THE SOUTH SHORE OF CATALINA ISLAND, AT LEAST HALFWAY ACROSS THE WORLD FROM WHERE IT HAD DISAPPEARED INCONSPICUOUSLY SO LONG AGO.
IT'S SHELL CRACKED AND SCARRED BY THIS TIME, IT TOOK LITTLE EFFORT FOR THE OVERDUE DODO TO HATCH FORTH AT LAST AND SCRAMBLE AWKWARDLY TO THE ROCKY SHORE...
WHERE HE SAT, DESOLATE AND ALONE, COLDER AND MORE WRETCHED THAN HE HAD EVER BEEN BEFORE. AND MAD! MADDER THAN HELL, AND AS MEAN AS ONLY THE LAST ANGRY DODO COULD BE!
I'LL MAKE THEM PAY! THEY'LL BE SORRY FOR WHAT THEY DID TO US!
WELL BEFORE HIS FIRST DAWN, HAVING SOBERLY DECIDED HIS COURSE, THE AVENGING DODO, INDOMINABLE AND FULL OF WRATH, SET OUT ON HIS MURDEROUS PATH OF VENGEANCE!
I CAN'T HOPE TO KILL THEM ALL, BUT I'LL GET MANY — MANY BEFORE THEY ERASE MY KIND FROM THE EARTH!
THE STORY YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED IS FICTION! IT NEVER REALLY HAPPENED AT ALL. BUT WHAT IF IT DID?!
GOOD LORD — CHOKE —
WHAT IF IT DID?!
END

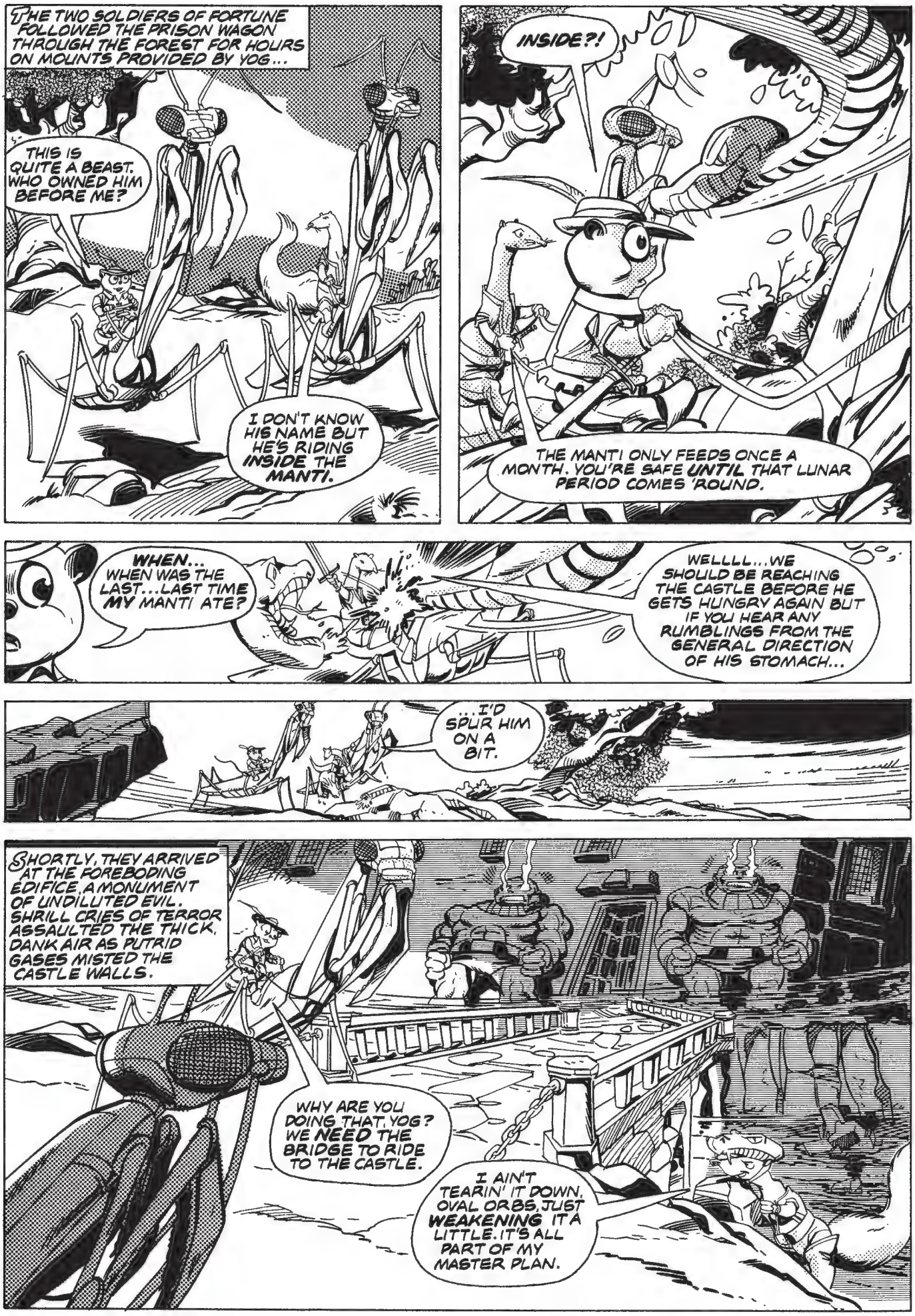


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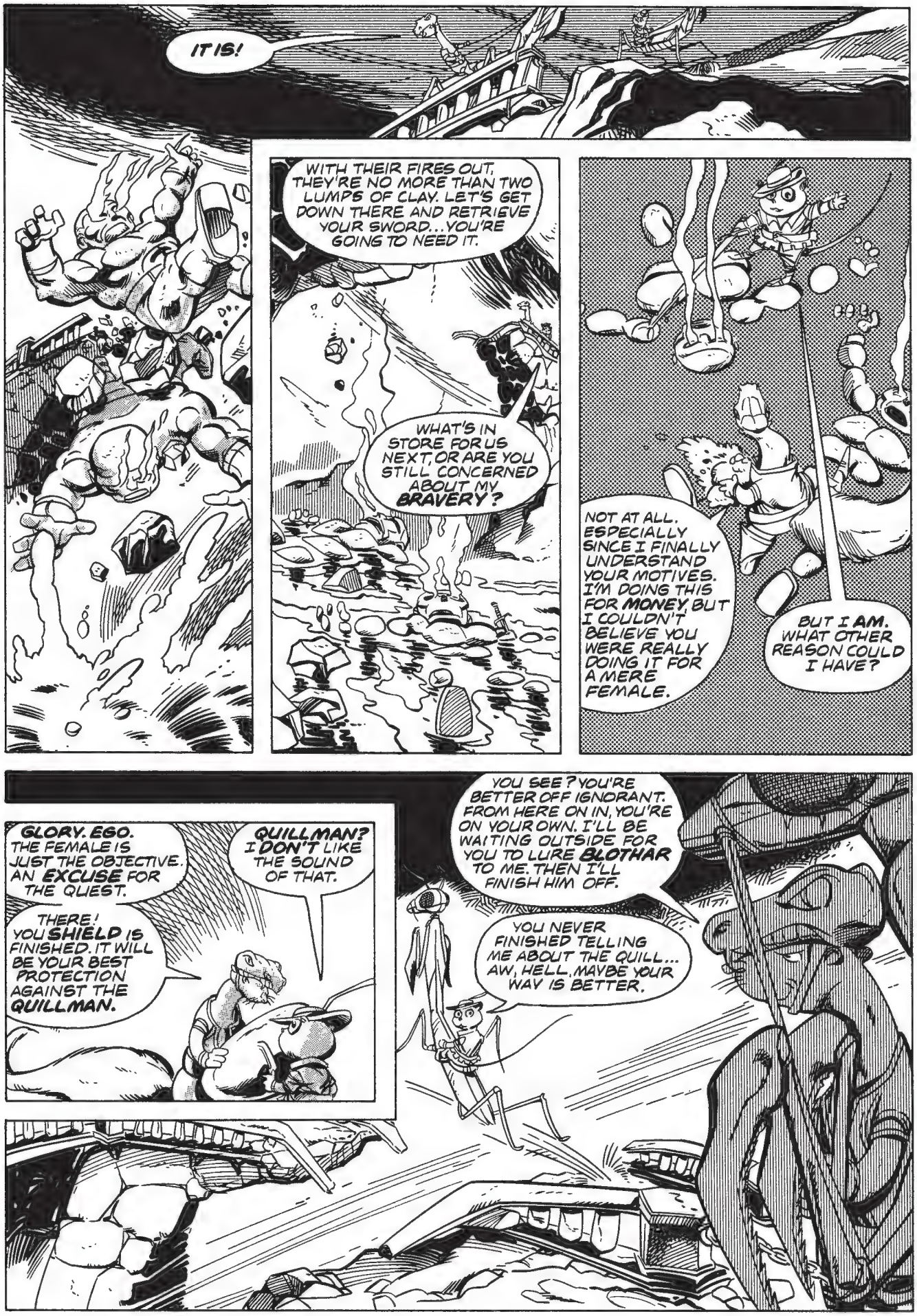

TOX, THE TARSIER, WAS HEADED FOR TOWN IN HOPES OF A FEW DAYS OF HARMLESS EROTIC FUN. THE MOON-EYED MONKEY HADN'T A THOUGHT TO DRAW HIS SWORD-NAY, HIS HAND WAS TO BE CLASPED ABOUT A GOBLET, NOT A HILT...
YET THIS NIGHT HE WAS DESTINED TO STAIN THE WOODS DEEP BLACK WITH THE BLOOD OF MONSTERS.
the Cow's other udder INN
TIME FOR A BIT OF FROLIC AND... SNICKER, SNICKER... MISCHIEF, METHINKS.
DEAD DUCK DIVE
OUR TALE TRULY BEGINS IN "THE COW'S OTHER UDDER INN", AS SORDID A DEN OF CANDOR AS ANY IN THE LAND OF LUXOMBUXOM. BUT, THERE WERE GEMS GLITTERING AMONG THE COALS. VOLUPTUOUS LITTLE MARMOSETS WITH LONG SLENDER TAILS AND BOUNTIFUL BREASTS OF FUR DANCED AMONG THE SINFUL SYNOD. THIS WAS...
GOOD EVE', TOX. YOU'LL BE WANTING YOUR USUAL.
AYE, MY USUAL TABLE, MY USUAL DRINK, AND MY... WINK... USUAL, YOU LUSTY WENCH.
MY FURRY WORLD
...AND WELCOME TO IT!
SCRIPT- NICOLA CUTI
ART- JOE STATON
LETTERING- BRUCE D.
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AS THE ADVENTUROUS TOX QUAFFED HIS BREW, A BRIEF GLIMMER OF PULCHRITUDE CHANCED TO PASS THE VIEW OF THE GLASS BOTTOM OF HIS TANKARD
SCARCE A FULL SECOND WAS SHE IN HIS SIGHT BUT EVERY DETAIL OF HER VISAGE WAS ETCHED ON HIS BRAIN. HER FUZZY, ANGELIC FACE; HER SAD SLOE EYES... AN IMAGE OF SIMIAN PERFECTION.
HE SPRANG FROM HIS TABLE HOPING TO WAYLAY THE COACH WHICH CARRIED HIS BELLA DONNA, HIS MAIDEN, HIS PRINCESS AFAR FROM HIS BLEATING HEART.
BUT IT WAS NO GAILY DECORATED COACH THAT CLATTERED O'ER THE COBBLESTONE STREETS. HORROR OF HORRORS! TOX'S BRIDE-TO-BE... ALAS, NOW, BRIDE-NEVER-TO-BE... WAS A PASSENGER OF THE DREADED...
MEAT WAGON! FAIR YOUNG FEMALES WERE CARTED OFF TO KING BLOTHAR'S CASTLE TO FULFILL HIS LUST AND THEN HIS APPETITE!


HOLD ON, FLASH! YOU'RE GOING AFTER THE WRONG VILLAIN. FREE HER FROM THE LIZARD AND SHE'LL JUST BE RECAPTURED. STRIKE TO THE ROOT OF THE EVIL ... KING BLOTHAR!
THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING I AM YOG THE BOUNTY HUNTER. I'VE BEEN HIRED BY THOSE GIRLS' DADDIES TO END BLOTHAR'S REIGN, AND I COULD USE A PARTNER.
NOT INTERESTED.
HALT, YOU REPTILIAN SLIME! RELEASE THOSE FEMALES OR YOUR ICY BLOOD WILL SPURT FROM THE STUMP OF YOUR NECK!
HEY!
THWACK
THWACK
THWACK!
SO MUCH FOR THE DIRECT APPROACH. NOW, SUPPOSE WE TRY IT YOG'S WAY.
ONLY IF IT'S AN IMPROVEMENT ON TOX'S WAY.


THE TWO SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE FOLLOWED THE PRISON WAGON THROUGH THE FOREST FOR HOURS ON MOUNTS PROVIDED BY YOG...
THIS IS QUITE A BEAST. WHO OWNED HIM BEFORE ME?
I DON'T KNOW HIS NAME BUT HE'S RIDING INSIDE THE MANTI.
INSIDE?!
THE MANTI ONLY FEEDS ONCE A MONTH. YOU'RE SAFE UNTIL THAT LUNAR PERIOD COMES 'ROUND.
WHEN... WHEN WAS THE LAST...LAST TIME MY MANTI ATE?
WELLLL...WE SHOULD BE REACHING THE CASTLE BEFORE HE GETS HUNGRY AGAIN BUT IF YOU HEAR ANY RUMBLINGS FROM THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF HIS STOMACH...
...I'D SPUR HIM ON A BIT.
SHORTLY, THEY ARRIVED AT THE FOREBODING EDIFICE, A MONUMENT OF UNDILUTED EVIL. SHRILL CRIES OF TERROR ASSAULTED THE THICK, DANK AIR AS PUTRID GASES MISTED THE CASTLE WALLS.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THAT, YOG? WE NEED THE BRIDGE TO RIDE TO THE CASTLE.
I AIN'T TEARIN' IT DOWN, OVAL ORBS, JUST WEAKENING IT A LITTLE. IT'S ALL PART OF MY MASTER PLAN.


YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE HAVEN'T YOU. THIS ISN'T YOUR FIRST JOURNEY TO BLOTHAR'S CASTLE.
I'M IN TROUBLE? IF I'M GOING TO BE A PART OF THESE SECRET PLANS, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE. WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND?
I LOST SEVERAL PARTNERS SETTING EVERYTHING UP. I HOPE I'VE GOT IT RIGHT, THIS TIME. IF I DON'T, YOU'RE IN TROUBLE.
'CAUSE YOU MAY NOT LIKE IT. FOR INSTANCE, SEE THOSE STATUES AHEAD...
THEY AREN'T STATUES!
GOLEMS!
THAT WAS DUMB. GOLEMS ARE MADE OF CLAY! YOUR SWORD WILL REMAIN INSIDE HIM.
SO? WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO?
THE SMART THING, FUZZY BRAINS. RETREAT!
I SUPPOSE THIS IS ALL PART OF YOUR FANTASTIC MASTER PLAN.

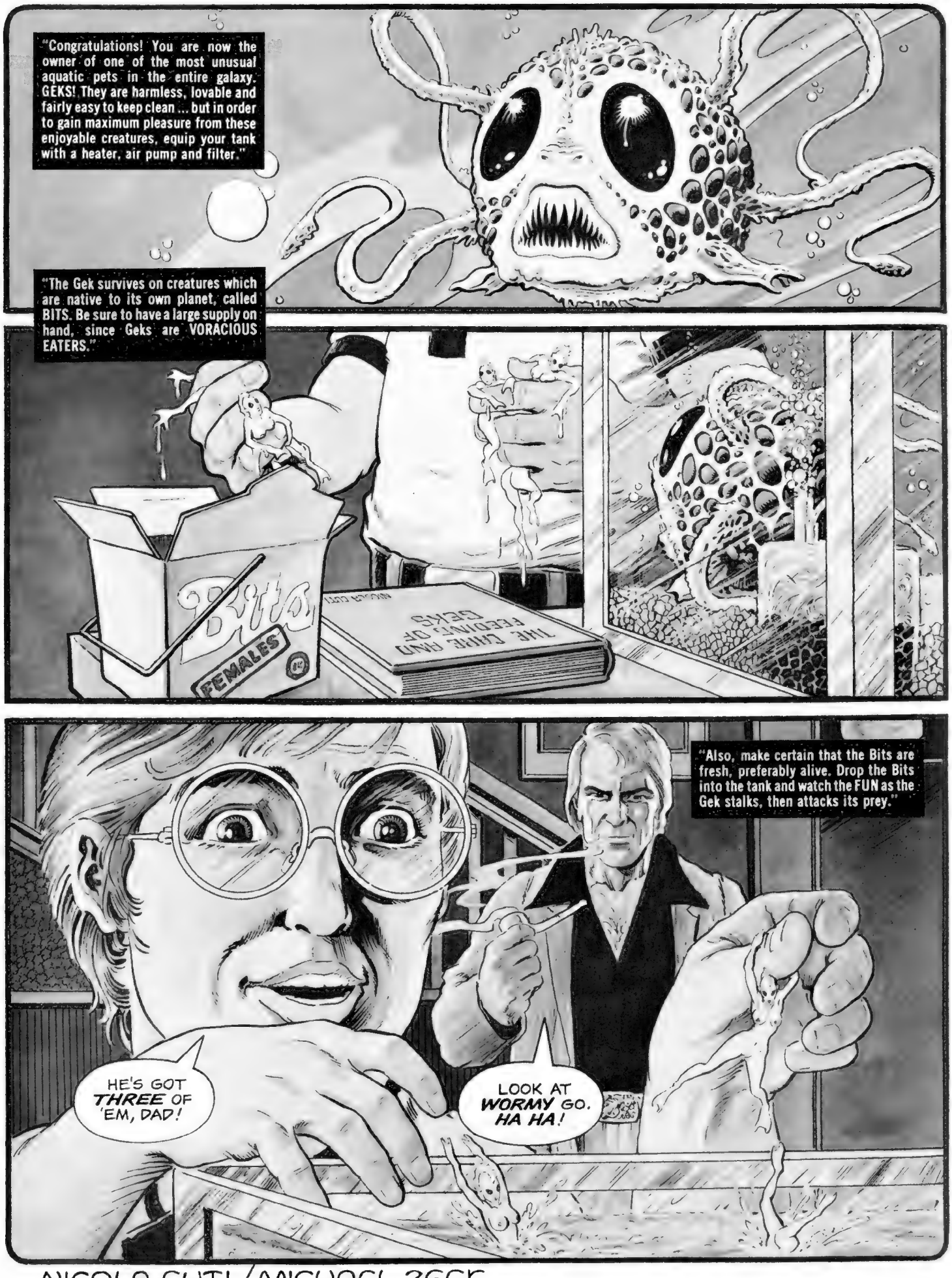

IT IS!
WITH THEIR FIRES OUT, THEY'RE NO MORE THAN TWO LUMPS OF CLAY. LET'S GET DOWN THERE AND RETRIEVE YOUR SWORD...YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT.
WHAT'S IN STORE FOR US NEXT, OR ARE YOU STILL CONCERNED ABOUT MY BRAVERY?
OOH
NOT AT ALL. ESPECIALLY SINCE I FINALLY UNDERSTAND YOUR MOTIVES. I'M DOING THIS FOR MONEY, BUT I COULDN'T BELIEVE YOU WERE REALLY DOING IT FOR A MERE FEMALE.
BUT I AM. WHAT OTHER REASON COULD I HAVE?
GLORY. EGO. THE FEMALE IS JUST THE OBJECTIVE. AN EXCUSE FOR THE QUEST.
QUILLMAN? I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT.
THERE! YOU SHIELD IS FINISHED. IT WILL BE YOUR BEST PROTECTION AGAINST THE QUILLMAN.
YOU SEE? YOU'RE BETTER OFF IGNORANT. FROM HERE ON IN, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN. I'LL BE WAITING OUTSIDE FOR YOU TO LURE BLOTHAR TO ME. THEN I'LL FINISH HIM OFF.
YOU NEVER FINISHED TELLING ME ABOUT THE QUILL... AW, HELL. MAYBE YOUR WAY IS BETTER.


WHAT AM I DOING HERE? ALL I AM IS YOG'S PAWN, A WAY TO DRAW BLOTHAR INTO THE OPEN. TOUGH LUCK, YOG, OLE BOY, 'CAUSE AFTER I LOCATE THE GIRL, I'M...
PSSST! OVER HERE. IN THE CELL.
I KNEW YOU'D COME FOR ME! I'M TARA AND I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT. BLOTHAR ATE THE OTHERS.
TARA, MAYBE YOU CAN ANSWER A QUESTION FOR ME. WHAT IS A QUILLMAN?
THE QUILLMAN! HE'S A MONSTER! HE HAS THE FACE OF A PORCUPINE, A BODY COVERED WITH POISONOUS QUILLS, WHICH HE CAN LAUNCH LIKE MISSILES, AND... HE'S STANDING THREE METERS BEHIND YOU!
YOU KNOW, NONE OF THAT BOTHERED ME UNTIL YOU GOT TO THE LAST PART.
STAY BEHIND THE SHIELD!
I'VE ONLY GOT ONE QUILL. HOPE THAT'S ENOUGH.
BINGO! THIS WAY OUT!
WHAT ABOUT BLOTHAR? AREN'T YOU GOING TO VANQUISH HIM?

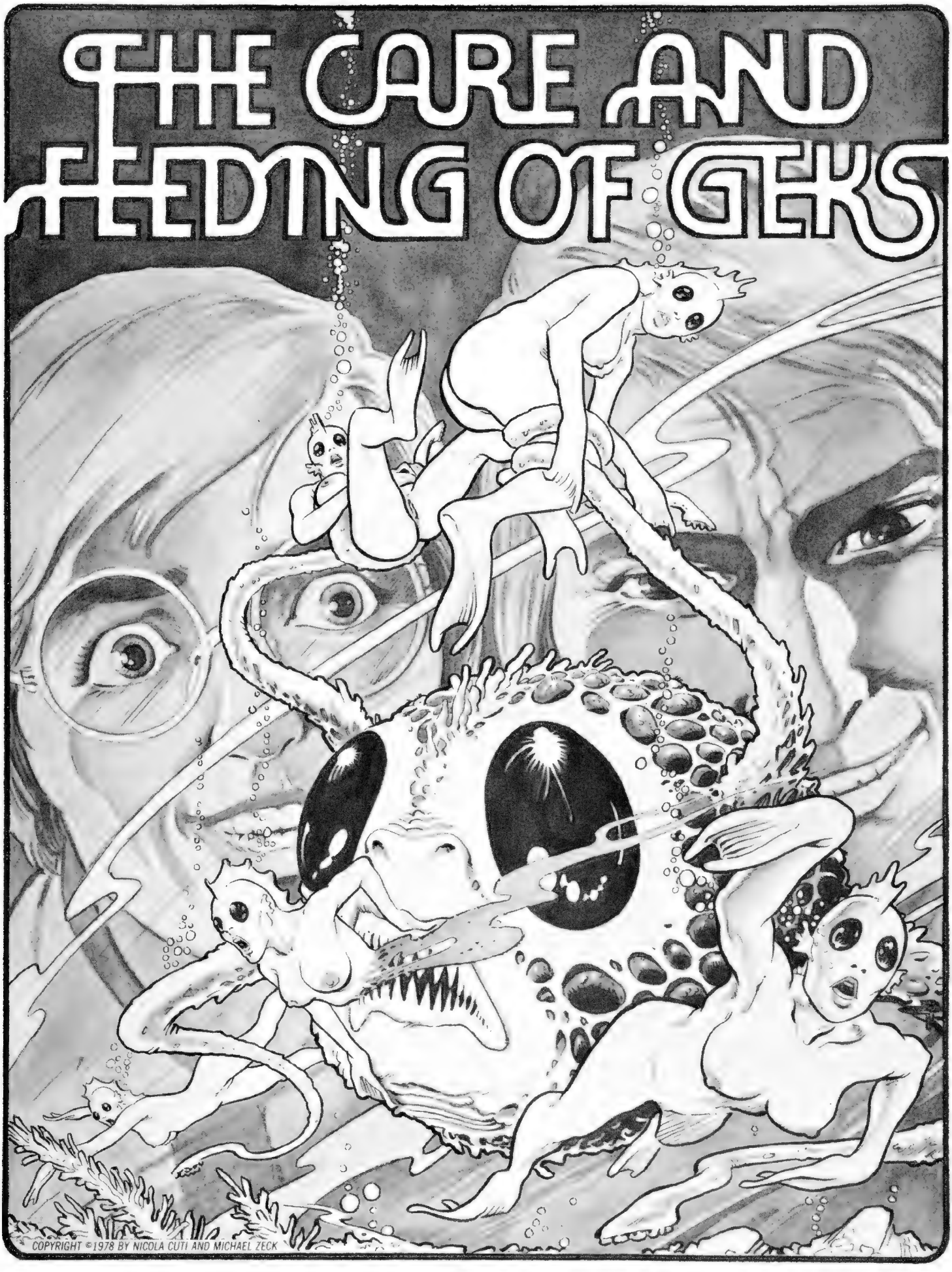

NOT UNLESS HE'S THREE METERS AWAY.
FLYIN' BALLS OF FUR! THERE AIN'T A CREATURE ON THE PLANET THAT ENORMOUS.
BLOTHAR!
WHAT'S THIS FURRY PILLAR DOING HERE? I DON'T RECALL IT BEFORE.
THE AIR SHUDDERED WITH HIS MOCKING LAUGHTER. THE COLOSSUS WAS PLEASED WITH THE SPECTACLE. HE HAD LOST HIS LIVING ALARM SYSTEMS BUT THE SHOW HAD BEEN WORTH THE PRICE. NOW IT WAS TIME TO...
HE'S JUST STANDING THERE ... LAUGHING!
NO NEED FOR HIM TO RUSH. HE HAS ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD TO CUT US OFF.
... BRING DOWN THE CURTAIN!
CRASH!
WHUMP!


HE'S ALMOST UPON US. WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO YOUR MANTI.
IT'S NOT MY AMBITION TO END UP AS TATAR D' TARSIER SO I'LL KEEP RUNNING.
KER-THUNK!?
WHERE DID THAT BIG ARROW COME FROM?
GLAAAH!
THWACK!
YOG! SO THAT WAS THE FINAL STEP IN HIS PLAN. HE MUST HAVE HAD A CROSS BOW HIDDEN IN THE WOODS.
THIP!
CRA-ASH!


WHERE ARE THE OTHER GIRLS? SOON AS I COLLECT MY REWARD I WANT TO GO TO VERBUN TO KILL KING BONNBONN.
BLOTHAR ATE THEM. TOO BAD, YOG, GUESS THERE'S NO WAY FOR YOU TO TURN A PROFIT.
AS FOR ME, I'M GOING TO MARRY TARA AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER.
PROFIT! HUMMM!
YEARS LATER...
McYOGS
DADDY! DADDY! I WANNA BLOTHAR BURGER WITH THE WORKS.
YOG, IS BONNBONN STILL REIGNING IN VERBUN?
TRY OUR BLOTHAR BURGER
FAT, AND FIT FOR KILLING. YOUR OLD MANTI IS GROOMED AND WON'T BE HUNGRY FOR WEEKS.
THE END



NICOLA CUTI / MICHAEL ZECK


THE CARE AND FEEDING OF GEKS
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THAT'S DISGUSTING! I DON'T SEE HOW THE TWO OF YOU CAN ENJOY THAT BLOODY SPECTACLE.
AW, MOM, I'M JUST LEARNING ABOUT NATURE.
NATURE! HUMPH! DON'T THINK I HAVEN'T NOTICED HOW THOSE BITS RESEMBLE HUMAN BEINGS AND HOW YOUR FATHER ONLY BUYS FEMALES!
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
MAN'S DOMINANCE OVER WOMAN!
YOU GET A VICARIOUS THRILL FROM SEEING THOSE HELPLESS LITTLE BITS BEING RIPPED TO SHREDS!... AND YOU'RE TEACHING YOUR SICK PERVERSION TO TOMMY!
WILL YOU PLEASE STOP THAT, DORIS...
UH, DO YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED FOR YOUR TRIP?
I'LL ONLY BE GONE A FEW DAYS. MOTHER DIDN'T SOUND TOO ILL. ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN FIX MEALS FOR YOU AND TOMMY?
OF COURSE, HONEY. TOMMY AND I CAN TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES.
BE A GOOD BOY AND DO WHATEVER YOUR FATHER TELLS YOU TO DO...
SO LONG, SWEETHEART.
GOODBYE, MOM. SAY HELLO TO NANNY FOR ME.
NOW, BACK TO FEEDING THE GEK.
UH OH, DAD, WE'RE IN TROUBLE.


THERE'S JUST ONE MORE LEFT! SHOULD WE SAVE HER FOR LATER OR GIVE HER TO THE GEK NOW?
SAVE HER!
WE'LL GET SOME MORE AT THE PET SHOP. LET'S GO.
WE'D LIKE A CONTAINER OF BITS. FEMALES ONLY! OUR GEK,.. UH, PREFERS JUST THE FEMALES.
I'M SORRY, SIR, BUT WE HAVE NO BITS, MALE OR FEMALE.
THE GOVERNMENT SUSPECTS THEY MIGHT BE SAPIENT CREATURES, AND HAS RESTRICTED THEIR SALE.
INTELLIGENT BITS?! THAT'S ABSURD!
DADDY, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO FEED WORMY?
YOU MIGHT TRY RAW MEAT. IT'S THE BLOOD THEY'RE REALLY AFTER.
"Since Geks are such picky eaters, it is doubtful that you will be able to lure them from their normal diet, should Bits be in short supply. Raw meat cannot replace living flesh."
HE'S NOT EVEN POKING AT THE MEAT, DAD.
WE'LL HAVE TO FEED HIM THE LAST BIT.
DO WE HAVE TO, DAD? I MEAN, NOW THAT WE KNOW HOW SMART IT IS, AN' ALL?
DROP IT IN, AND ~YAWN~ THEN LET'S GO TO BED.


SHE'S IN THE TANK, DAD, AN' WORMY SWALLOWED HER IN ONE BIG GULP!
RATS, I WANTED TO SEE THAT. OKAY, TOMMY, LET'S HIT THE SACK!
TOMORROW WE'LL SEE IF WE CAN FIND A SUBSTITUTE MEAL FOR THE GEK.
G'NIGHT, DAD.
"When deprived of their standard diet, only the blood of living animals will satisfy Geks."
"Some Geks have been known to crawl from their ponds in search of a fat PI-JIUS or juicy GARTHORM. Once they find a victim..."
"...Two hollow needles extend from the tips of their feeding tentacles. The first needle draws out the BLOOD of their host, while the second needle..."
"...Replaces the blood with a POTENT FLUID known only as GEKIOUS. The effects of this chemical on animals is bizarre and it is fortunate that the Gek has NEVER attacked a human in this way."


"Some of the observed recipients of GEKIOUS have developed a craving for the Gek's food, BITS."
"Other victims have actually undergone fantastic metamorphosis of their physical appearance."
"It therefore behooves you to keep your Gek well fed, even though humans are NOT in danger."
DAD, ARE YOU GOING TO BE LONG? THE HALLOWAYS WILL BE HERE SOON TO TAKE US TO THE BEACH.
I JUST GOT IN HERE!
HAVEN'T EVEN TURNED THE LIGHT ON YET.
WHERE'S THE DAMNED-- AHHH, HERE IT IS.
MAN, HOW I HATE TO LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MORNING...
AND I FEEL PARTICULARLY LOUSY TODAY.
WOW, DO I NEED A CLOSE SHAV--
KLK
OH, MY GOD!
MY GOD!

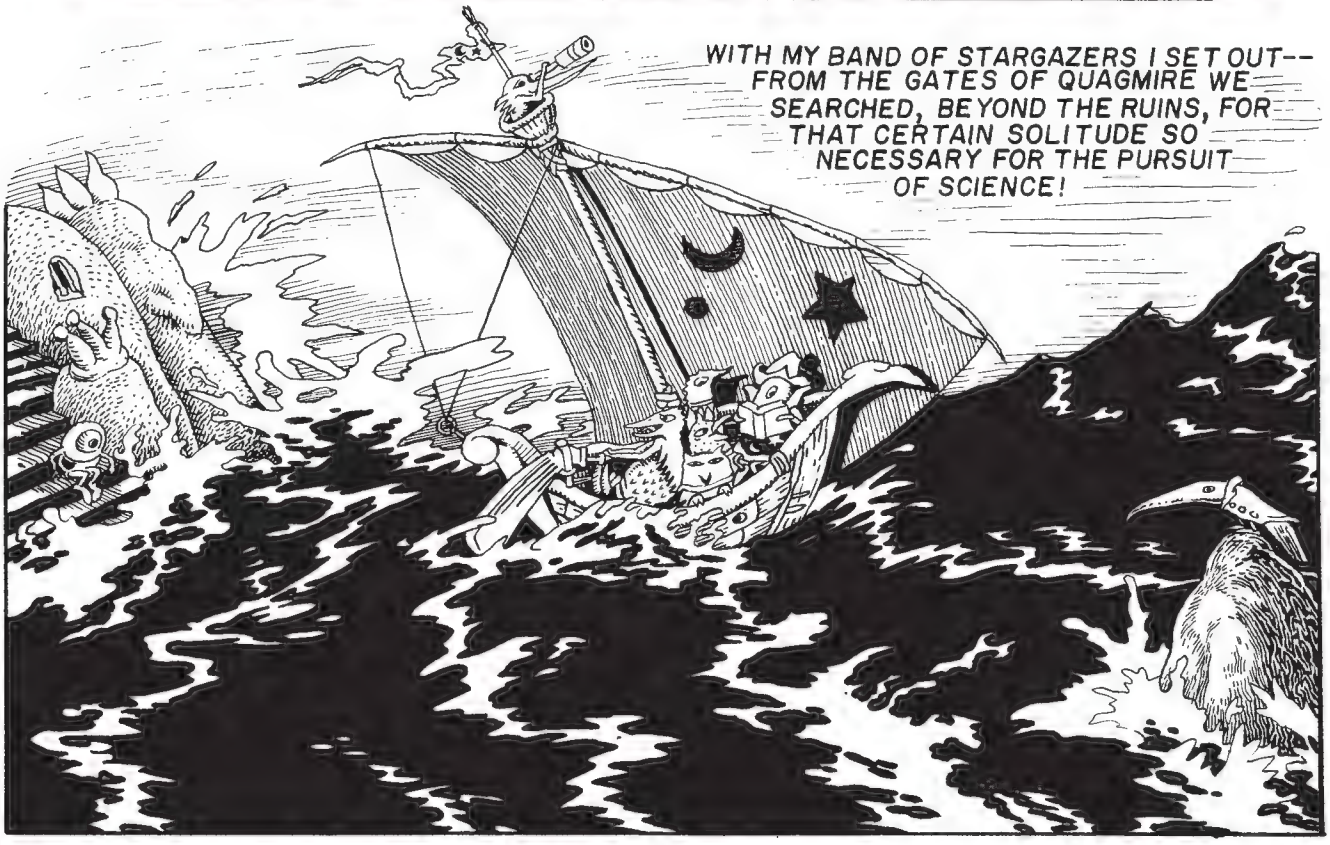

ARE YOU ALRIGHT, DAD?
YEAH, YEAH, I'M... UH... FINE.
LOOK, UH... SON, I WANT YOU TO GO TO THE BEACH WITHOUT ME. MAYBE I'LL JOIN YOU LATER.
IT ISN'T A GAG... THIS STUFF IS REAL!
CAN'T I USE THE BATHROOM?
AW, I'LL GO NEXT DOOR AND ASK THE HALLOWAYS IF I CAN USE THEIRS.
SORRY YOUR DAD IS ILL, TOMMY... DO YOU WANT TO GO FOR A SWIM?
SURE, TINA, BUT GO SLOW... 'CAUSE I DON'T SWIM AS GOOD AS YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT, YOU LITTLE RASCAL?
THE GIRLS. THEY LOOK LIKE BITS. YOU KNOW, GEK FOOD.
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S A COMPLIMENT OR NOT. I'VE NEVER SEEN A BIT UP CLOSE.
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO SWIM AS WELL AS ME. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?
COULD YOU SHOW ME HOW TO SWIM AS FAST AS MY DAD?
HE'S THE FASTEST GUY I KNOW IN THE WATER.
BITS! YUM!

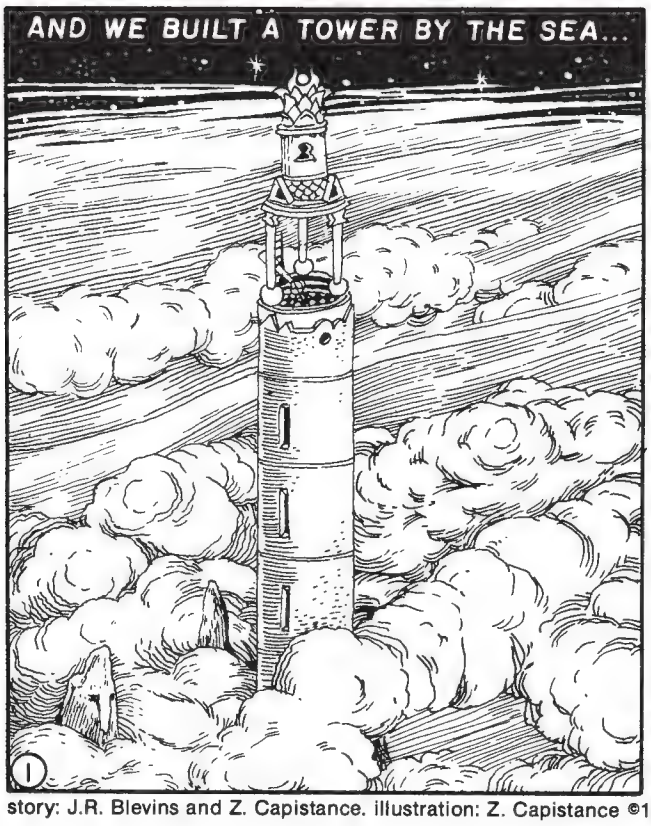

HOW 'MY DOIN', TINA? PUFF PUFF TINA, AM I SWIMMIN' RIGHT?
TINA?
TINA!! WHERE ARE YOU?
WHAT? WORMY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HEY, YOU'RE NOT WORMY! ...YOU'RE TOO BIG!
HELP! HELP ME, SOMEBODY! I'M BEIN' 'TACKED BY A SEA MONSTER!
DON'T FIGHT ME, SON... IT'S DADDY!
"As long as your Gek's water is kept free of debris and waste matter and he is well fed, you may look forward to enjoying a long-lived, contented pet."
HI, EVERYBODY. I'M HOME.
DID YOU EAT WEL--?
"Be sure to read the next chapter on how to breed your Geks!"
HELLO, HONEY.
TOMMY AND I WERE JUST ABOUT TO HAVE A SNACK.
CARE FOR A BITE?
OH, GOD!
the end


BOOBY TRAP
WHAP!
Ditko
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ONCE CAME A TIME WHEN THE BIRDS FORGOT HOW TO FLY...

Stargazer





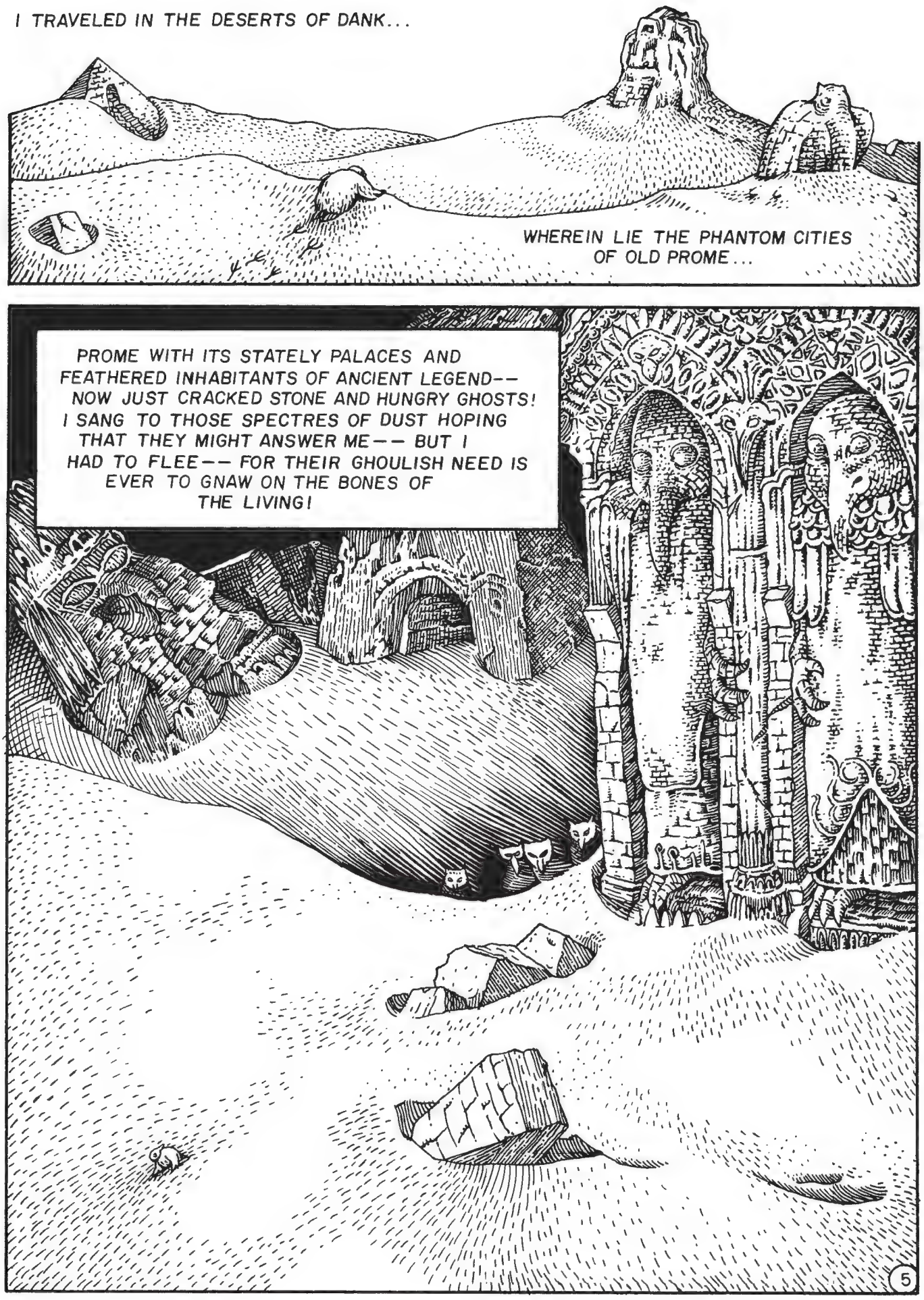


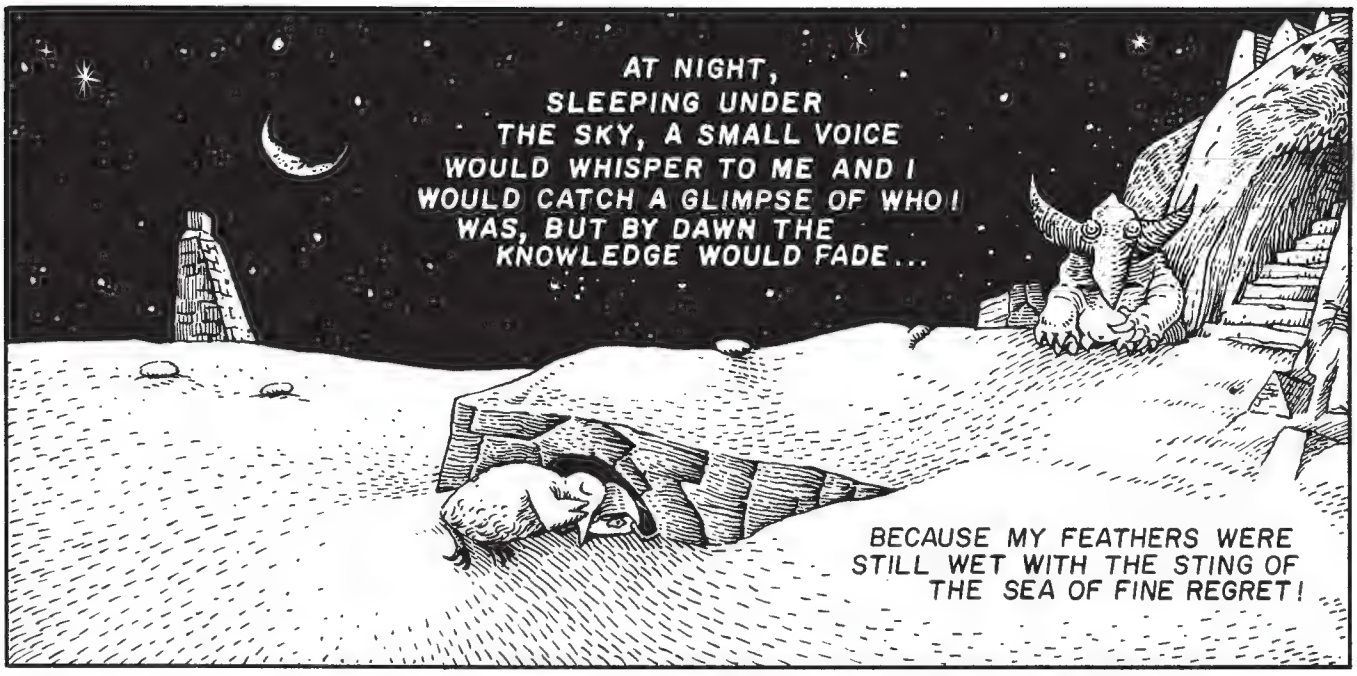
story: J.R. Blevins and Z. Capistance. illustration: Z. Capistance ©1981


IT WAS IN THE TENTH MONTH I SAW HIM, FLYING IN THE MOONLIGHT...
THIS WAS NO DREAM! I KNEW INSTANTLY THAT HE WAS THE LEGENDARY PURPLE GOBBLER! HE-WHO-FLIES!
I BECAME OBSESSED WITH THE ANCIENT MYTH THAT BIRDS ONCE FLEW, IN THE FORGOT-TEN TIME OF OLD PROME WHEN THE SPELL OF REGRET DID NOT HOVER OVER THE LAND!
IMMERSING MYSELF IN FORBIDDEN MANUSCRIPTS AND OBSCURE MATHEMATICAL FORMULAE, I VOWED TO BUILD A DOORWAY TO THOSE WHO FLEW BETWEEN THE SPACES AND BARGAIN WITH THEM FOR THEIR SECRETS OF FLIGHT!
MY COLLEAGUES COULD NOT DISSUADE ME FROM THESE FUTILE AND FATAL PURSUITS--
BUT I WAS NAIVE IN MY DISCOURSES WITH MONSTERS FROM THE OUTRE SPHERES, TOO TRUSTING WITH STELLAR FALSE-FACES!
2


AND WHEN BY MOONLIGHT THEY ASSAILED THE TOWER FOR OUR CRYSTAL KNOWLEDGE WE WERE WITHOUT PROTECTION SAVE FOR BEAK AND CLAW-- AND THOSE WHO WERE SO DEAR TO ME, NEVERMORE SHALL I SEE THEM-- OUR BLOOD MINGLED ON THE TOWER FLOOR AND I WAS TAKEN...
...AND TORTURED!
THEN THROWN INTO THE KIND SEA, FOR IT IS THE SEA OF FINE REGRET!
3

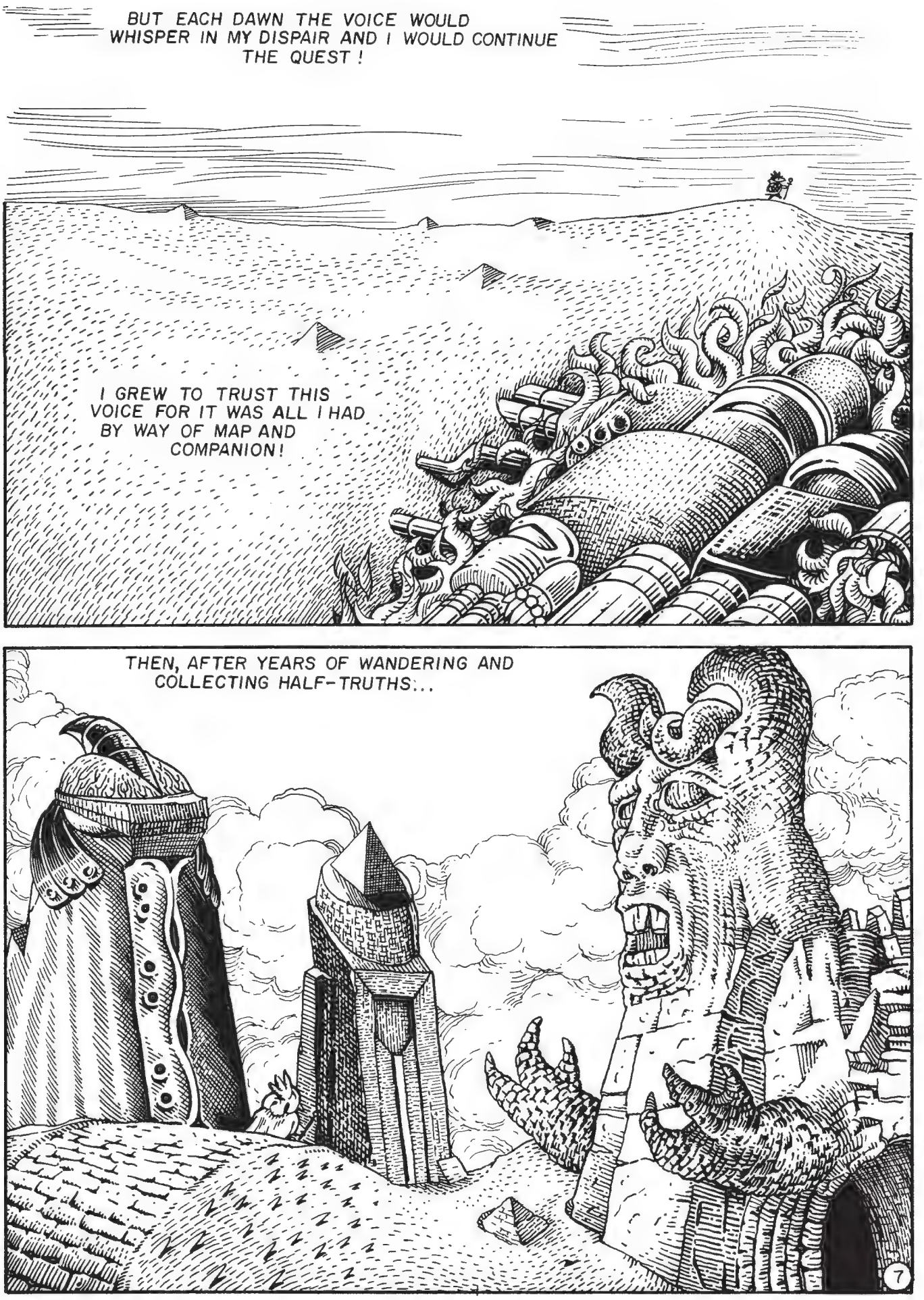

WHEREUPON I FEARED I WAS LOST ... DEAD! BUT THE SEA CLEANSED MY SOUL WOUNDS AND TOOK AWAY THE MEMORY OF WHO I WAS AND THE HORROR I LIVED THRU, FOR SUCH IS THE NATURE OF THAT BODY OF WATER! FOR A LONG WHILE I FLOATED WITH THE CURRENT, HAPPY WHILE MY INJURIES HEALED -- IN MY IGNORANT STATE I COULD DO NO MORE...
AND I HAD A VISION OF ISLANDS BLOOMING IN A SEA OF CALM WITH THE BIRDS FLYING HOME TO ROOST...
IN TIME I DRIFTED TO THE SHORE OF THE TWO-FACED WASTE, OBSCUSE LANDS WHERE REGRET HAS TAKEN ITS STRONGEST STAND! I CRAWLED ONTO ITS GRITTY BEACH AND SANG TO THAT SWAMP THE ANCIENT SONG OF ALL WHO SWIM IN THE OCEAN OF FINE REGRET--"SHOW ME THE WAY BACK HOME!"
4


I TRAVELED IN THE DESERTS OF DANK...
WHEREIN LIE THE PHANTOM CITIES OF OLD PROME...
PROME WITH ITS STATELY PALACES AND FEATHERED INHABITANTS OF ANCIENT LEGEND-- NOW JUST CRACKED STONE AND HUNGRY GHOSTS! I SANG TO THOSE SPECTRES OF DUST HOPING THAT THEY MIGHT ANSWER ME-- BUT I HAD TO FLEE-- FOR THEIR GHOULISH NEED IS EVER TO GNAW ON THE BONES OF THE LIVING!
5


AT NIGHT, SLEEPING UNDER THE SKY, A SMALL VOICE WOULD WHISPER TO ME AND I WOULD CATCH A GLIMPSE OF WHO I WAS, BUT BY DAWN THE KNOWLEDGE WOULD FADE...
BECAUSE MY FEATHERS WERE STILL WET WITH THE STING OF THE SEA OF FINE REGRET!


MY JOURNEY LED THROUGH FORESTS ABLAZE WITH THE FIRE OF INCANESCENT BLISS! STRANGE INQUIGULOUS GROWTH!


...ASCENDING MOUNTAIN PASSES I GREW CYNICAL AND A BLINDING MADNESS ENTERED MY BRAIN IN THOSE FROZEN HEIGHTS—— NONE KNEW THE ANSWER I HAD NEED OF!
6


BUT EACH DAWN THE VOICE WOULD WHISPER IN MY DISPAIR AND I WOULD CONTINUE THE QUEST !
I GREW TO TRUST THIS VOICE FOR IT WAS ALL I HAD BY WAY OF MAP AND COMPANION!
THEN, AFTER YEARS OF WANDERING AND COLLECTING HALF-TRUTHS...
7

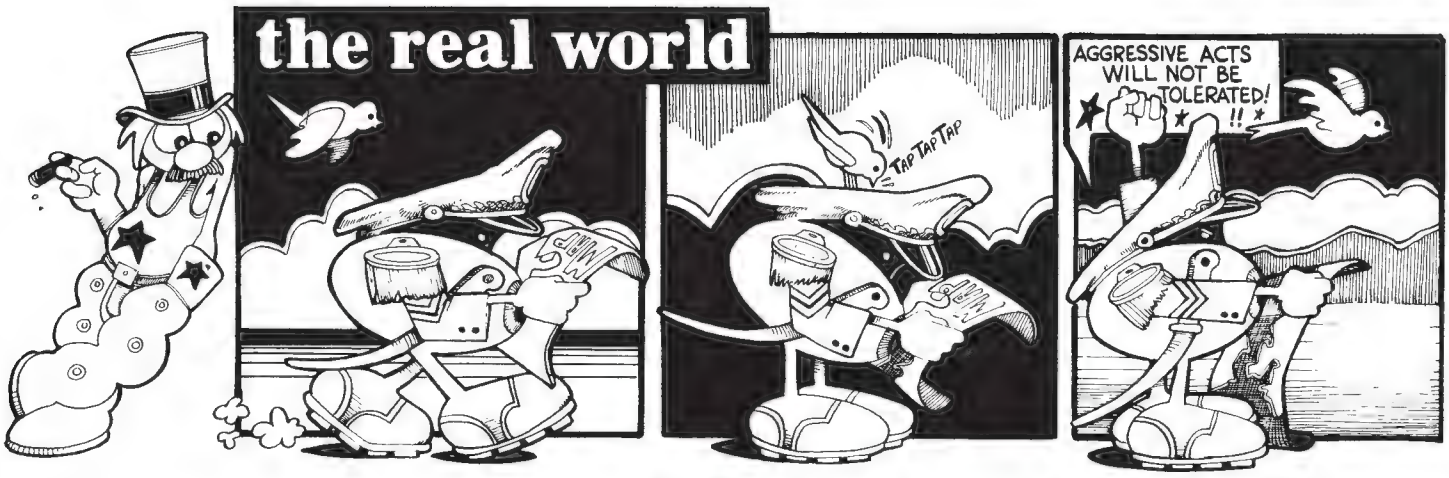

...I CAME AT LAST TO THE METALOID TEMPLE OF THE FALSE-GOD FEIGN!
8

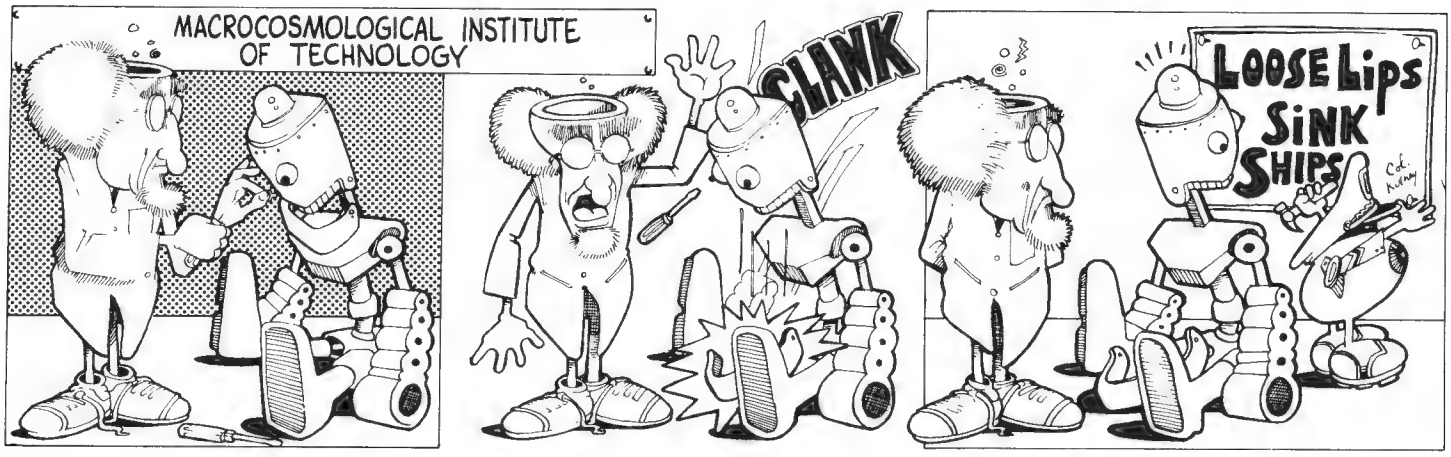

CAUTIOUSLY I APROACHED-- FOR THIS WAS A LIVING GOD, CHAINED FOR AN ETERNITY FOR SOME UNMENTIONABLE CRIME!
WOULD HE HEAR MY PLEA? COULD MY INSIGNIFICANT PLIGHT POSSIBLY MATTER TO HIM?
BEFORE THAT BRONZE IMAGE I SANG MY SONG WITH ALL THE FEELING AND SKILL OF EXPERIENCE...
FEIGN RESPONDED LIKE NEVER BEFORE, OR SINCE, WITH LARGE MOLTEN TEARS THAT DRIPPED DOWN ONTO HIS ALTAR! FIERCE WERE THESE BLAZING TEARS BUT I CONTINUED THE SONG!
9

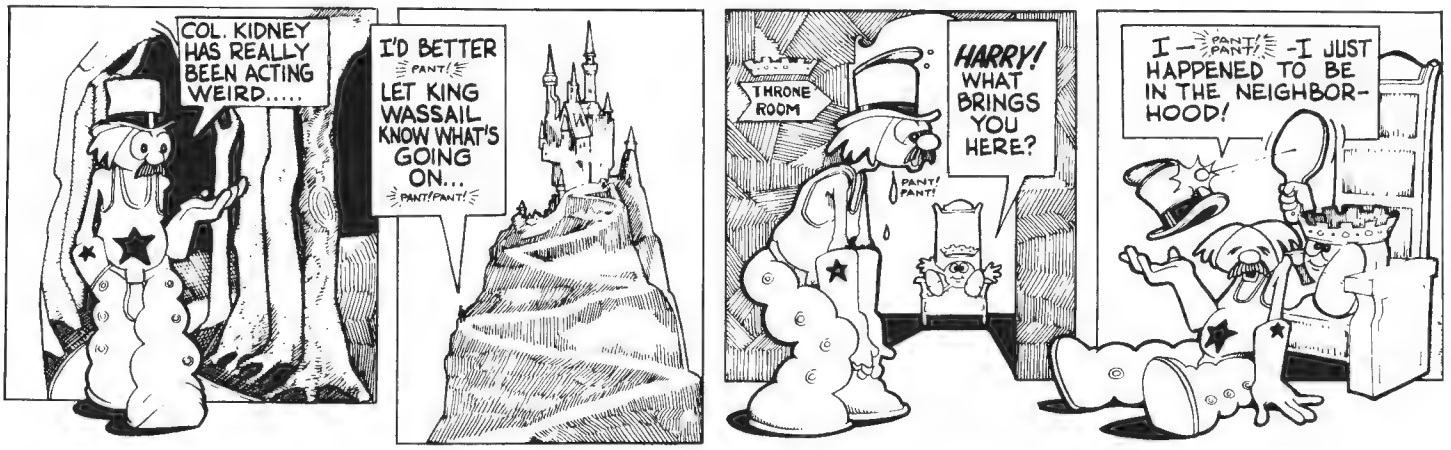

THE HEAT WAS SUCH THAT IT BURNED DEEP WITHIN ME, DRYING EVEN THE WATERS OF THE SEA OF FINE REGRET!
THUS DID I REGAIN THE MEMORY OF WHO I WAS AND THE DESIRE TO FREE MY TOWER HOME FROM THOSE INFECTIOUS NOXIOUS HORRORS!
IN SEARING PAIN MY WINGS TOOK SHAPE!
I BECAME THE BIRD OF PREY!
FROM THOSE METAL TEARS I FASHIONED A GREAT SWORD AND SHIELD, THEN HAD THEM BLESSED BY THE DECIETFUL PRIESTS OF FEIGN WITH LIES AND SHARP CRITICISM!
AND I FLEW HOMEWARD--
FOR NOW I WAS THAT SWIFT VOICE THAT CRIES OUT FOR JUSTICE AND VENGEANCE-- AND MY EYES WERE BRIGHT AS MY SWORD FOR BLOOD BATTLE!
10

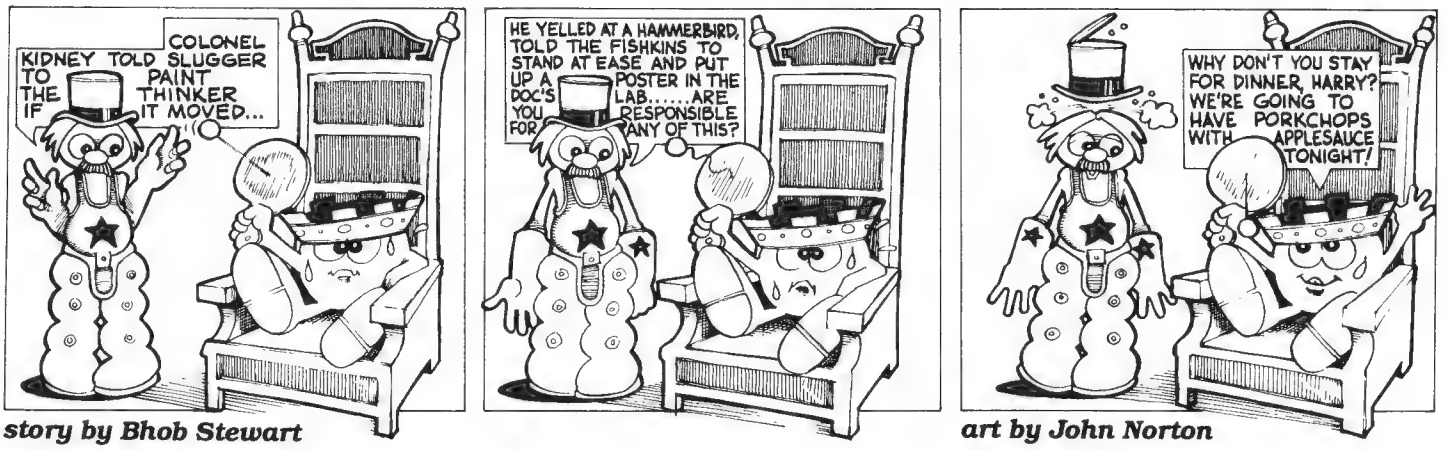

THAT NIGHT I SLEW MANY OF THAT VILE AND SLIMY HORDE -- FOR THEY WERE NO MATCH AGAINST THE MOLTEN SWORD OF FIEGN!
BUT I COULD NOT RETAKE THE TOWER IN THE FIRST ONSLAUGHT-- THERE SEEMED NO END TO THAT DEMON HOST...
DISGUISED I STOLE DEEP INTO THAT LABRYNTH--
AND FELL UPON MY UNSUSPECTING ENEMIES IN THEIR LAIRS!
11


FINALLY I KILLED THE LAST OF THE FALSE-FACE THINGS AND PURIFIED THE THE PLACE WITH FIRE AND ICE--
BUT I DID NOT HAVE THE HEART TO REBUILD ON THAT RUIN FOR PART OF ME HAD DIED WITH IT! AND AS MY ANGER FADED THE POWERS BESTOWED BY FEIGN DISAPPEARED! I COULD NO LONGER FLY!
NOW I HAVE RETURNED TO THE CITY! BUT THE INNER VOICE STILL WHISPERS TO ME IN THE TWILIGHT...
EACH NIGHT AT SUNSET...
I CLIMB THE HEIGHTS OF QUAGMIRE...
12
AND LIFT MY VOICE TO THE HEAVENS-- AND SING THE UNANSWERED...
"SHOW ME THE WAY BACK HOME!"

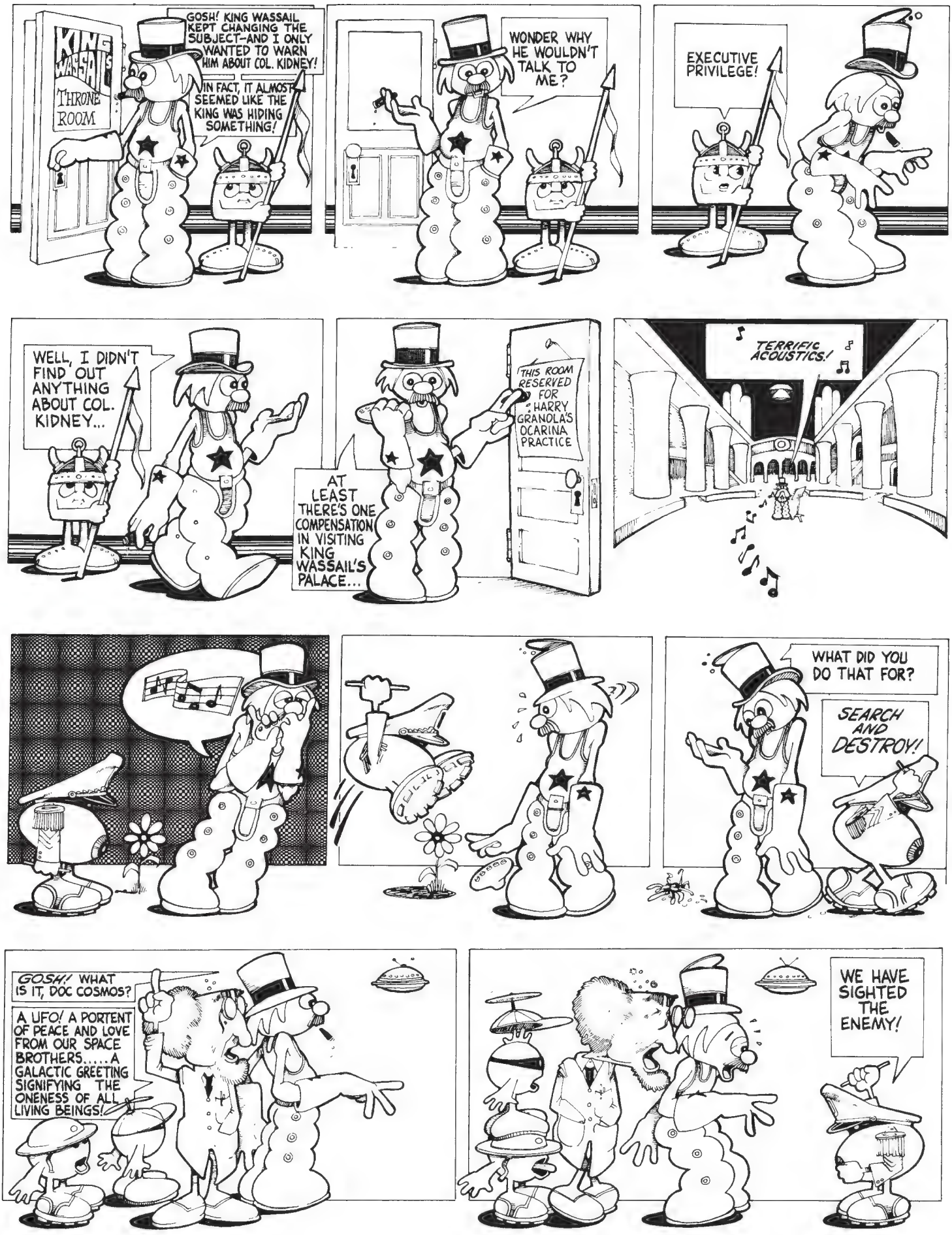




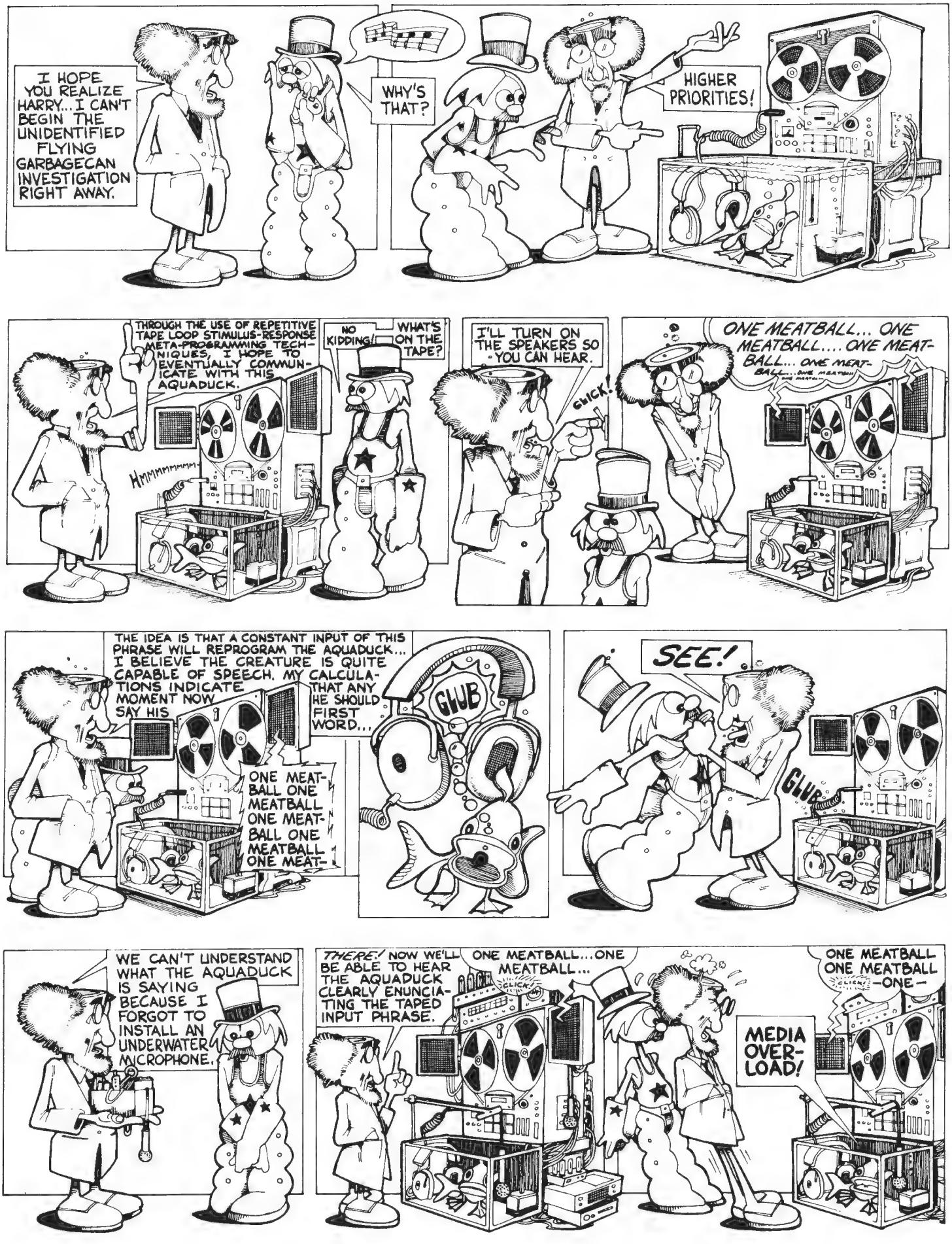




story by Bhob Stewart ***art by John Norton***


KING WASSAIL'S THRONE ROOM
GOSH! KING WASSAIL KEPT CHANGING THE SUBJECT—AND I ONLY WANTED TO WARN HIM ABOUT COL. KIDNEY!
IN FACT, IT ALMOST SEEMED LIKE THE KING WAS HIDING SOMETHING!
WONDER WHY HE WOULDN'T TALK TO ME?
EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE!
WELL, I DIDN'T FIND OUT ANYTHING ABOUT COL. KIDNEY...
AT LEAST THERE'S ONE COMPENSATION IN VISITING KING WASSAIL'S PALACE...
THIS ROOM RESERVED FOR HARRY GRANOLA'S OCARINA PRACTICE
TERRIFIC ACOUSTICS!
WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR?
SEARCH AND DESTROY!
GOSH! WHAT IS IT, DOC COSMOS?
A UFO! A PORTENT OF PEACE AND LOVE FROM OUR SPACE BROTHERS.....A GALACTIC GREETING SIGNIFYING THE ONENESS OF ALL LIVING BEINGS!
WE HAVE SIGHTED THE ENEMY!


PERHAPS THIS MEANS CONTACT WITH A SUPERIOR CIVILIZATION....PERHAPS WE WILL LEARN ABOUT UNDREAMED OF TECHNOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL ADVANCES WHICH WILL RADICALLY ALTER OUR ENTIRE WAY OF LIFE!
WASTE THE ENEMY!
GARBAGE
THIS IS TERRIBLE, COL. KIDNEY! WHY DID YOU DUMP GARBAGE ALL OVER THE U.F.O?
TO PROVOKE THE ENEMY INTO AN OVERTLY HOSTILE ACTION...
THE MIND BOGGLES!
THE BOOKS of CHARLES FORT
THE BOOKS of CHARLES FORT
IN THE ENTIRE ANNALS OF PHENOMENA, THERE SEEM TO BE NO OTHER RECORDED CASES OF U.F.G.
U.F.G?
THE BOOKS of CHARLES FORT
UNIDENTIFIED FLYING GARBAGECANS.

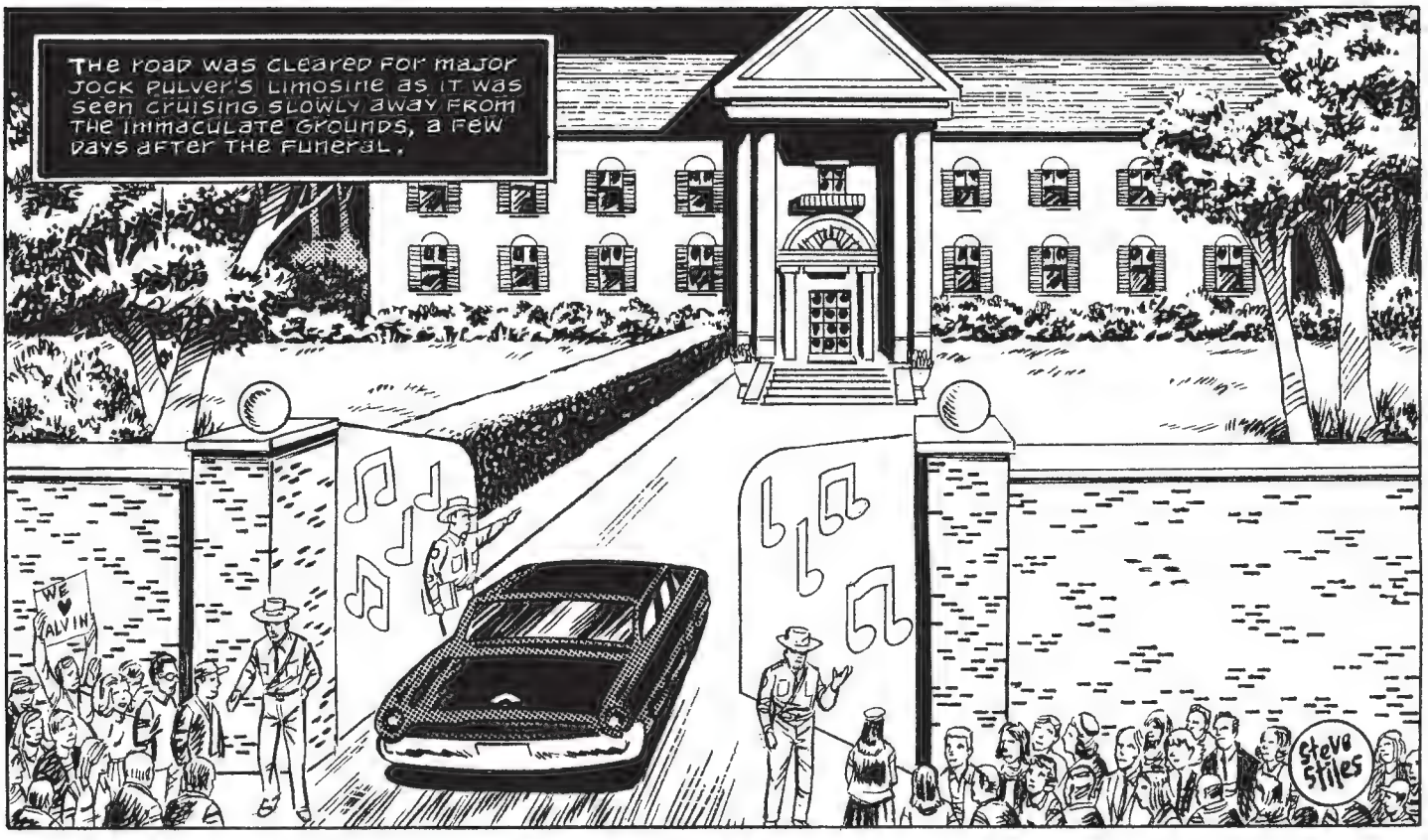

I HOPE YOU REALIZE HARRY... I CAN'T BEGIN THE UNIDENTIFIED FLYING GARBAGECAN INVESTIGATION RIGHT AWAY.
WHY'S THAT?
HIGHER PRIORITIES!
THROUGH THE USE OF REPETITIVE TAPE LOOP STIMULUS-RESPONSE META-PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES, I HOPE TO EVENTUALLY COMMUNICATE WITH THIS AQUADUCK.
HMMMMMMMM
NO KIDDING!
WHAT'S ON THE TAPE?
I'LL TURN ON THE SPEAKERS SO YOU CAN HEAR.
CHICK!
ONE MEATBALL... ONE MEATBALL.... ONE MEATBALL... ONE MEATBALL... ONE MEATBALL
THE IDEA IS THAT A CONSTANT INPUT OF THIS PHRASE WILL REPROGRAM THE AQUADUCK... I BELIEVE THE CREATURE IS QUITE CAPABLE OF SPEECH. MY CALCULATIONS INDICATE THAT ANY MOMENT NOW HE SHOULD SAY HIS FIRST WORD...
ONE MEATBALL ONE MEATBALL ONE MEATBALL ONE MEATBALL ONE MEAT-
GLUB
SEE!
GLUB
WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE AQUADUCK IS SAYING BECAUSE I FORGOT TO INSTALL AN UNDERWATER MICROPHONE.
THERE! NOW WE'LL BE ABLE TO HEAR THE AQUADUCK CLEARLY ENUNCIATING THE TAPED INPUT PHRASE.
ONE MEATBALL... ONE MEATBALL...
CLICK
ONE MEATBALL ONE MEATBALL -ONE-
CLICK
MEDIA OVER-LOAD!

LAST ACT OF A LIVING LEGEND

WORDS AND LETTERING BY BILL PEARSON

PICTURES AND TONES BY STEVE STILES

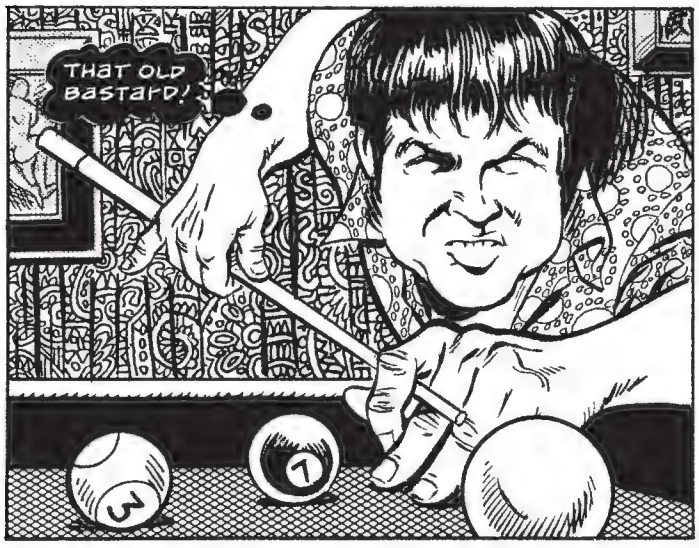
THE NEWS STUNNED HIS MILLIONS OF FANS WHEN ALVIN PRIESTLEY, THE WORLD RENOWNED ENTERTAINER DIED SUDDENLY AT THE PEAK OF HIS CAREER. CROWDS OF MOURNERS SURROUNDED THE WALLS OF HIS STATELY MANSION FOR DAYS, MANY SINGING HIS SONGS, MOST IN TEARS, ALL STRICKEN WITH GENUINE GRIEF. THEIR HERO, DEAD BY HIS OWN HAND, A SUICIDE? IT COULDN'T BE!







Priestley's every move from the beginning had been managed by Pulver, but his once naive young star was rebelling!



He was rich now, but still obligated to relentless rehearsals, appearances, performances...*WORK!* and trapped by his oppressive fame.



Alvin had a chubby stand-in, a single slob few knew about. He socialized with the dope, copied his hair style, every detail of his grubby appearance.





Even gaining the weight was part of the plan. His body size had to match Stanley's.



He'd planted enough hints... overdosed just often enough to convince those in his tight inner circle that he was close to cracking up completely. He knew they wouldn't even bother to check the body too closely.



He had enough money now to live comfortably for the rest of his life. a *NEW* life... a *FREE* life! Millions dream of living the luxurious life of a superstar, but some incredibly famous people have different dreams, different nightmares!

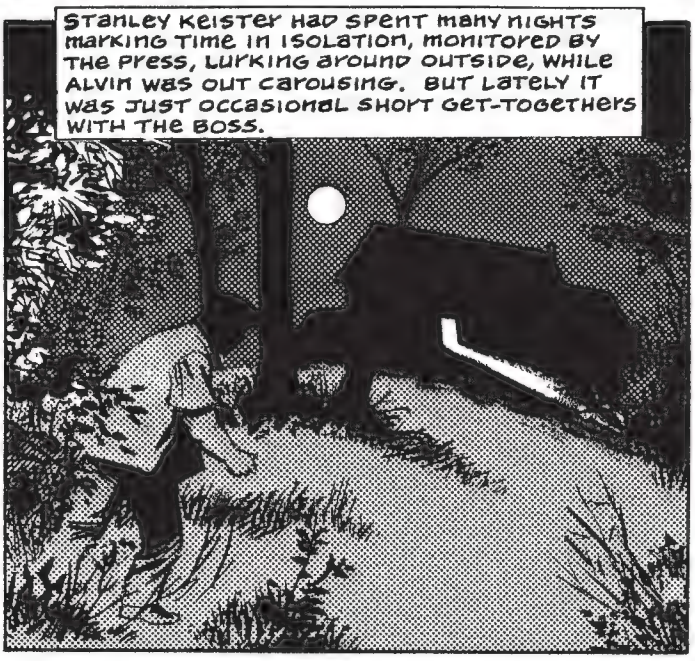




HIS ABRUPT ORDER WASN'T THAT UNUSUAL. ALVIN PRIESTLEY HAD LONG BEEN A MAN OF MANY MOODS, ALL EXTREME. THERE WAS NO-ONE IN A POSITION TO CONTRADICT HIS ARROGANT COMMANDS EXCEPT THAT KNOW-IT-ALL PULVER... BUT HE WASN'T OFTEN AROUND.



STANLEY KEISTER HAD SPENT MANY NIGHTS MARKING TIME IN ISOLATION, MONITORED BY THE PRESS, LURKING AROUND OUTSIDE, WHILE ALVIN WAS OUT CAROUSING. BUT LATELY IT WAS JUST OCCASIONAL SHORT GET-TOGETHERS WITH THE BOSS.



ALVIN WAS IN UNUSUALLY HIGH SPIRITS. HE EVEN MIXED A DRINK FOR STANLEY PERSONALLY AS THEY REMINISCED ABOUT SUCCESSFUL SCAMS OF EARLIER, SIMPLER TIMES.



ALVIN HAD LEARNED PRECISELY WHAT COMBINATION OF LEGAL AND ILLEGAL INGREDIENTS WOULD INDUCE A DEEP COMA. THEN, TEN MINUTES PRESSING A PILLOW HARD AGAINST THE FACE WAS ENOUGH TO COMPLETE THE JOB.



STANLEY'S BODY WOULD BE FOUND IN ALVIN'S CLOTHES, COMPLETE WITH MONOGRAMMED UNDERWEAR...IN ALVIN'S BEDROOM. THOSE CLOSE TO THE STAR WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO GIVE THE CORPSE MORE THAN A CURSORY GLANCE.



He'd gone over every detail so often that the final steps in Alvin's scheme fell into place like a well-rehearsed movie scene.

Over several months, he'd gathered cash from several bank accounts, adding that to considerably more he'd never deposited in any bank.



He couldn't pack anything... just leave with the clothes on his back, and cheapest shoes.



He took care to make his way unseen by the secret path behind his mansion...



But he couldn't resist coming around to the front for a last lingering look at the symbol of his triumphant career.



Early morning in Memphis. The streets are empty of all but a few lonely men, either up to no good or just too poor to afford a place to sleep. None of them pay any attention to the slovenly derelict who shuffles along as he'd studied Stanley's gait.



Alvin had spent blissful hours trying to decide where to start 'Marshall Clark's' new life. Unshaven and unkempt, he didn't rate a second look.



He'd been nervous at first, out in public, but as he gradually realized he was attracting no attention at all, he relaxed.



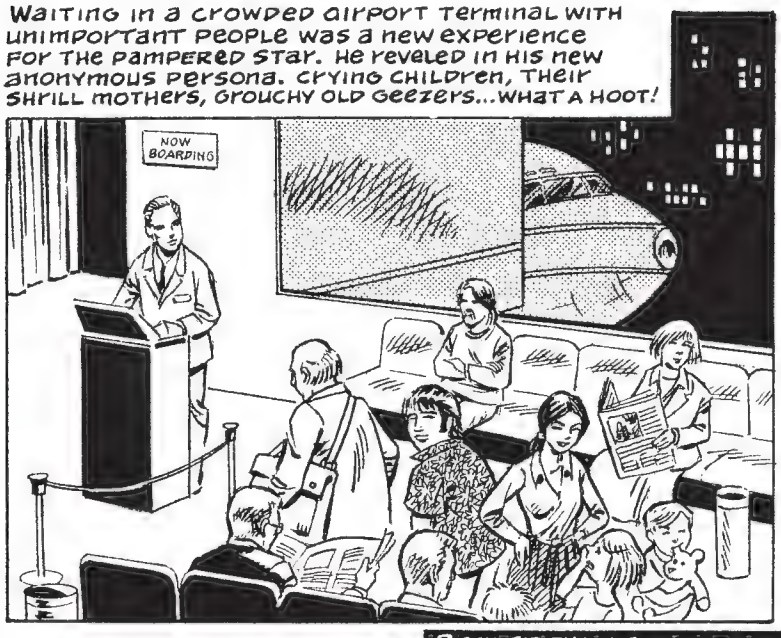
Everyone was engrossed in their own petty lives...



'Marshall Clark' was comfortable enough to continue fantasizing about his wide opportunities. He would find a deluxe hideout first, near the beach, and then maybe open a nightclub. His horizons were opening like the portals of paradise.

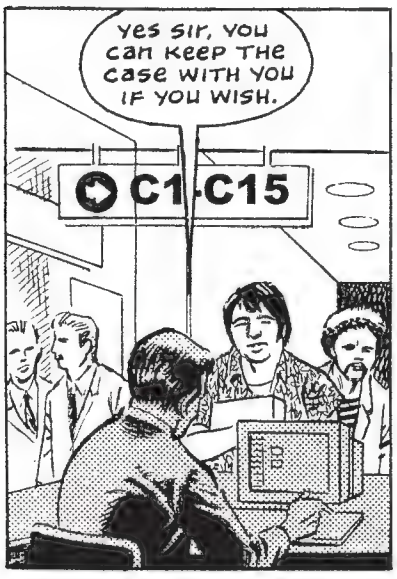


Waiting in a crowded airport terminal with unimportant people was a new experience for the pampered star. He reveled in his new anonymous persona. Crying children, their shrill mothers, grouchy old geezers...what a hoot!





There were bank accounts and a credit card in the name of Marshall Clark. This was no spur-of-the-moment getaway.



Back at the mansion, a body had been found. Naturally there was pandemonium. The tragedy was on the news within the hour. People were shocked, but it fit the pattern. Obviously another rock legend had partied too hard, burned out too early.



It was late afternoon before Alvin reached Melbourne, and found his way to the city's best hotel by cab. Nobody had ever seen him 30 pounds over his studly movie shape. He was now and forever Marshall Clark!







SHE WAS JUST AN ORDINARY WOMAN, NOT A BEAUTY LIKE THE STARLETS HE WAS USED TO PICKING UP ON MOVIE SETS, BUT HE COULDN'T RESIST TRYING TO BRING OUT A BIT OF HIS PRIESTLEY CHARM.

THE TRUTH WAS, HE HADN'T NOTICED HER AT ALL, BUT HE WAS IN A BOUYANT MOOD, AND THAT WAS ALWAYS A GOOD TIME TO FIND FEMININE COMPANY. THE CONFIDENCE OF A PROVEN LADY KILLER WAS STILL A PART OF HIS NEW IDENTITY.







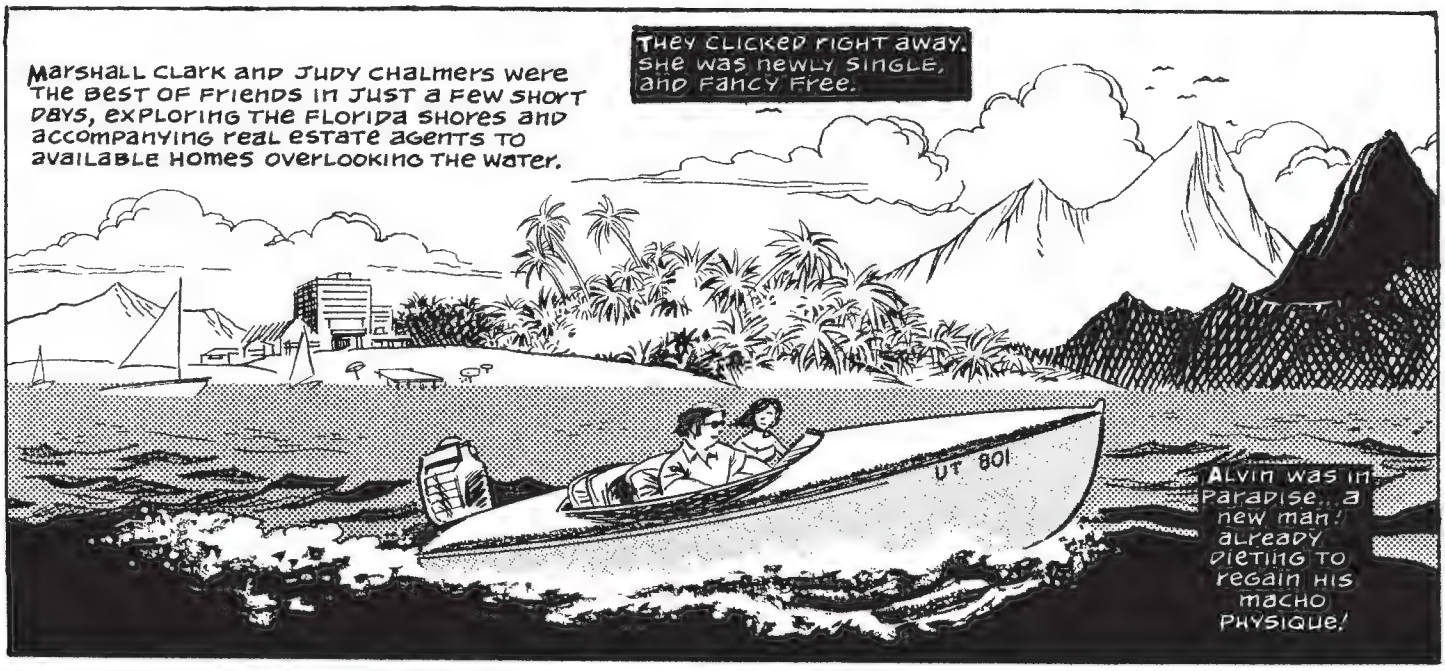


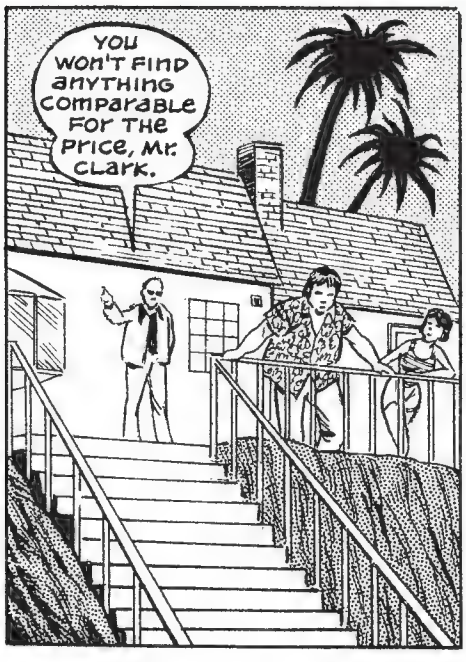
HE LET THAT REMARK FADE AWAY, AND CHANGED THE SUBJECT. IT SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO HIM THAT IF THERE WAS ANY SUSPICION, IT WOULD DIE AS QUICKLY AS IT CAME UP IF HE WERE PARTNERED BY A WOMAN WHO LOOKED AS COMMON AS SHE DID.



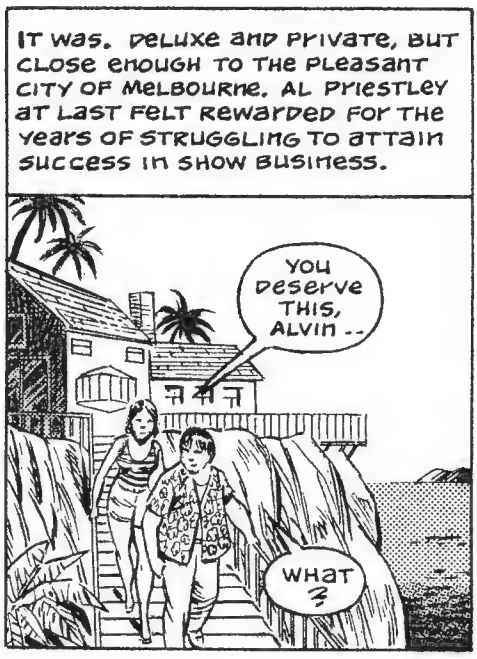

I'm not married, if that's why you're hesitating.
Alright, Mr. Clark, I'll keep you company...


But I've just left a longtime relationship. I'm not looking for another.


Marshall Clark and Judy Chalmers were the best of friends in just a few short days, exploring the Florida shores and accompanying real estate agents to available homes overlooking the water.
They clicked right away. She was newly single, and fancy free.
UT 801
Alvin was in Paradise... a new man! Already dieting to regain his macho physique!


You won't find anything comparable for the price, Mr. Clark.


We'll wait for you down at the car... Take your time.
Is this what you've been looking for?

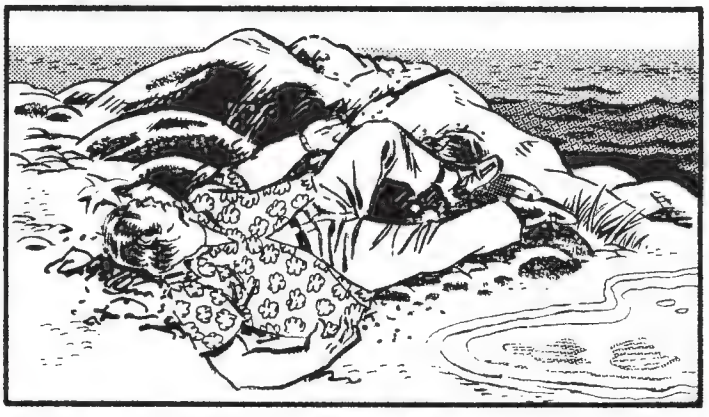

It was. Deluxe and private, but close enough to the pleasant city of Melbourne. Al Priestley at last felt rewarded for the years of struggling to attain success in show business.
You deserve this, Alvin --
What?





...by the wife of the innocent man he'd ruthlessly murdered. She'd followed him all the way from the rear of his palatial home, not knowing what mischief was afoot, but designated to find out. Oh yes, Stan had married, but he never bothered to tell Alvin. It had been easy for her to break the lock on Alvin's case full of cash while he was vainly grooming himself for the day. It was only fair. Her reward for avenging her dear deceased mate.

"He slipped," she told authorities.



The grieving widow found time a few days later, back in Memphis, to consult a lawyer. She grew suspicious, she told him, after her husband booked a flight for them and registered at a Melbourne hotel under a ficticious name.





ANY IDEA IN ANY FORM

by Bill Mason

One evening in April 1967, I took the subway to Times Square to see Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-Up*, which my students had told me contained Joycean epiphanies. After watching David Hemmings throw an imaginary tennis ball over a real fence to a mime troupe in mod London, I knew what they were talking about.

Leaving the movie house, I entered the bookshop next door and found the first two issues of *witzend* stacked on the front counter. I paid my two dollars and headed back to the subway, surprised and delighted to discover that **Wallace Wood** was still around.

Witzend was part of the mid-1960s New York cultural scene: not yet an underground comic and not yet psychedelic, although art nouveau curlicues were hovering at the edges of some of its panels. If you were plugged into the tiny, hardscrabble world of New York cartoonists and illustrators, *witzend* was the unofficial house organ of the Wallace Wood Studio — a place where grizzled veterans, raw beginners, and off-the-wall kids could meet, collaborate, and bounce ideas and sensibilities off each other's heads. The idea was for artists to put their work before the widest possible audience of potential colleagues, kindred spirits, art directors, and well-disposed members of the general public.

Al Williamson joined the *witzend* roster when he presented Wood, an old friend from their EC Comics days, with the original art for "Savage World," an eight-page extravaganza jointly drawn in 1956 by Williamson, **Angelo Torres**, **Roy G. Krenkel**, and **Frank Frazetta** — known collectively as the Fleagles — for a never-published *Buster Crabbe* comic book. Wood



Wallace Wood wrote a new script for an unpublished Al Williamson science fiction story for *witzend* #1.

wrote a new script to go with the art, and "Savage World" became the lead story in *witzend* #1. "Savage World" has everything going for it: graceful figure compositions, sudden shifts from close-ups to long shots, a fairy-tale city by Krenkel, an underground





Wood's interest in combining animal and human forms shows in these early drawings. Above: a sketch from his childhood. Right: a centaur with Animan-like features, perhaps an early version of the character, circa mid-1940s.

race of not-quite-human adversaries, a beautiful companion, and a level-headed sidekick for "Larry Gordon," as the Buster Crabbe character was now called. (The actor was sometimes billed as "Larry 'Buster' Crabbe," and he famously portrayed Flash Gordon in three 1930s–1940s movie serials.) Frazetta depicted a boyish and faunlike Crabbe for the back cover.

Writer-editor **Archie Goodwin** drew four witty, design-y, very contemporary-looking pages for "Sinner," a religious — or is "religiose" the better word? — fable with a wry moral, written and drawn in collaboration with artist **Dan Adkins**.

"Animan" (*witzend* #1 and #2), Wood's fantasy of a feral man who comes into contact with modern humans, dates back beyond a mid-1940s portfolio page ("a new kind of monster ... neither man nor animal") to a drawing from Wood's childhood of a satyr-like but already-recognizable Animan. Wood may have been partially inspired by the Lee Falk–Wilson McCoy jungle adventure strip *The Phantom* (1936–present), but there is also a strong autobiographical element in Animan's makeup. Wood was famously withdrawn and emotionally bottled up, and the images of Animan looking down from his tree branch or glaring — intelligent and inhuman — at the outside world, came from a deep place in Wood's imagination. For the rest, "Animan" is a vigorous and sexy adventure story, a worthy successor to early 1950s Avon comics, and exactly what the 40-year-old Wood wanted to be doing in 1967.

"Orion" (*witzend* #2) is a rousing fantasy-adventure written and drawn by **Gray Morrow**, whose visual panache enlivened *National Lampoon* and other 1970s periodicals. Morrow took artistic sophistication and allusiveness to new levels, impersonating now Joe Orlando and Wood at Avon, now Sid Check at Charlton, now Williamson and the Fleagles in some impossible Alex Raymond-esque illustrators' heaven. Orion and Mamba riding their mythic steeds across a spotted desert is comics art of the '60s at its swingin' best!

Wood's inclusion of **Reed Crandall's** John Carter illustrations (represented here by Part Four of the series and in the endpapers) may seem unconnected to *witzend*'s mandate to present readers with contemporary comic art, but in 1966 they conveyed the love of comics as a living tradition that kept Wood at his drawing table and gave *witzend* its reason for existing.

The first appearance of **Steve Ditko's** Mr. A in issue #3 introduced *witzend* readers not only to the strident and didactic side of Spider-Man's co-creator, but also to Ditko's unmatched skill as a storyteller and illustrator. Ditko's wiry drawing and taut narration becomes jumpy and hysterical as we follow teenage killer Angel, weepy and gullible Miss Kinder, and implacable Mr. A ("I don't abuse my emotions!") to the climactic rooftop scene.

In *witzend* #4 we learn Mr. A's secret identity in a well-paced story with a big-city newspaper setting. Ditko's admiration for Ayn Rand and his Objectivist "argefying" have not yet chilled the narrative and





By the mid-1940s Wood was finalizing his design for Animan. Above: An early version of Animan, surrounded by his beastly friends. Right: Wood included this Animan piece in the portfolio he was showing to New York publishers. Nobody expressed interest in the character, so Wood was free to publish it when the time came for *witzend*.

dramatic power of his work. The reader wants crime reporter Max Graine to triumph and the foppish villain Purity to get his just desserts. At this point in his career, Ditko was still an old-fashioned law-and-order conservative in the well-established comics tradition of Harold Gray, Chester Gould, and John Severin. Ditko also offered the humorous one-pagers, "Midnight Special" (*witzend* #2) and "Booby Trap" (*witzend* #12).

"Last Chance!" was conceived as "Tiga" in 1948 by a 20-year-old **Frank Frazetta**, with a script by his friend at Standard Comics, Joe Greene. According to the "Contents and Portents" page of *witzend* #3, Frazetta's art was "originally the first three weeks of a proposed daily comic strip." After 15 years in limbo, it was "jig-saw-puzzle-piddled" by Bill Pearson, who Wood directed to write a new narrative and rearrange the panels "to form a self-contained tale." The outrageously good-looking hero and heroine move gracefully from one panel to another, with plenty of reaction time. Frazetta was a "slow" artist whose work is meant to be scrutinized, not scanned, and Lane and Mari (as the principals are now called) remain suspended like prehistoric insects in amber.

Frazetta's contribution to *witzend* #8, a ten-page portfolio of illustrations to Edgar Allan Poe's "The City in the Sea," adapted from Frazetta's unpublished 1950s concept, "Nina," is an excellent — maybe the supreme — example of the pin-up sublime. The reader admires the draftsmanship, gets his skillfully elicited sexual frisson, and turns to the next feature.

The same issue contains an eight-page version of Lewis Carroll's mock-heroic "The Hunting of the Snark," transformed by **John Adkins Richardson** into a lush and thrilling science fiction action-adventure story. Once again, the question of what purpose has been served by having text and images so utterly at odds with each other forcibly obtrudes itself.

The painter-illustrator **Jeffrey Catherine Jones** (known at the time as Jeff Jones) became famous for her *National Lampoon* strip *Idyl* (1972–1975), in which a beautiful woman, usually alone, disports herself in a wooded landscape. Jones's "Alien" in *witzend* #6 is much less under the spell of Williamson and Frazetta than *Idyl*, and reminds me of the Spanish artists Enric Sio (1942–1998) and Esteban Maroto (b. 1942), known for their lush color and eccentric design. "Alien" is in sumptuous black-and-white, with resonant landscapes and pterodactyls that squawk in what looks like 1969 computer noises.

Gray Morrow's full-page illustration for *witzend* #6 appears to be a capriccio on the classic Williamson/Krenkel splash page for the EC story "Food for Thought" (*50 Girls 50 And Other Stories*, Fantagraphics Books, 2013).

"The Pipsqueak Papers" (*witzend* #3–5) is a three-part erotic fantasy (the first two of which appear in this volume) that is simultaneously sexy — Nudine looks like a combination of Walt Disney's Tinker Bell and Brigitte Bardot in her "sex kitten" period — and sweet and innocent. The splash page of the second





Above, Nudine. Right: Sally Forth.

installment, with the "baby man" Pip gazing at Nudine perched on a tree branch as a chorus of Wood critters looks on, is a perfect example of Wood's cute and loveable side: we could be reading Pogo in his comic book incarnation.

The 18-year-old **Art Spiegelman**, then going through his brief Flower Power period, contributed the densely patterned and psychedelic "A Very Strange Comic Strip" to *witzend* #3 and would definitely have felt at home with Pip and Nudine.

In 1965, Ballantine Books published paperback editions of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Overnight, every bookstore in New York City seemed to be displaying Barbara Remington's "Come to Middle Earth" poster, which was painted in the gemlike, imbricated early 1960s style made popular by the Dillons, among others. This was the period when Wood was reading Tolkien and Freud. His lifetime of immersion in comics and illustration began to percolate into *The World of the Wizard King*, which first appeared as a text story illustrated in a light, sketchy style.

"To see him come out, long after EC, with all this fairy-tale stuff came as a complete surprise to me," was **George Evans's** reaction.

Vaughn Bodē, famous for his monthly *Cheech Wizard* strips in *National Lampoon* and his "cartoon concerts" at comics conventions, was one of the sacred monsters of underground comics, with a Walt-Kelly-on-bad-acid drawing style and dialogue that can read like a non-stop torrent of screams and obscenities. But he was also a serious — possibly a great — comics artist, and *witzend* gave him a forum to express his deeply upsetting, always-surprising vision.

His "Cobalt 60" (*witzend* #7) is as fully staged and realized as a painting by Thomas Hart Benton or a Korean War combat story from *Two-Fisted Tales*. For once, Bodē has enough space to orchestrate the movements of his characters and the violence of his plot, to let situations build to a climax and then subside to the dying fall of a long closing caption. The 10-page narrative is rich and eloquent, and the emotional tone, although strident and raucous, is somewhere on the outskirts of authentic tragedy.

Witzend #11 contains the well-written (**Nick Cuti**) and beautifully drawn (**Mike Zeck**) story "The Care and Feeding of Geks," which appears to have been suggested by the 1936 Manly Wade Wellman story "The Kelpie," about a shape-shifting water sprite that lives in the hero's tropical fish tank. Zeck also drew — this time with a nautical tang worthy of Iger Shop artists Robert Hayward Webb and David Heames — "The Avenging Dodo" (*witzend* #10, written by Bill

Pearson), a story as good as anything in Classics Illustrated or EC horror, with a full-page splash that is simultaneously spine-tingling and hilarious.

Witzend #12 presents "Stargazer," in which an avian hero (who looks a bit like Alfred Jarry's King Ubu with his bishop's crook) wanders among demons and beasties from Hieronymus Bosch paintings and abandoned palaces and giant stone heads out of one of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's opium dreams. Drawn in a spidery, slightly fussy style by the mysterious Z. Capistance (the pseudonym of the prolific Marvel/DC inker **Dennis Janke**) and scripted by Janke's friend and associate **J.R. Blevins**, "Stargazer" is a leisurely narrative that invites the reader to savor the artwork and the stately, Leroy-lettered captions.

In "The Last Act of a Living Legend," the hero is an Elvis Presley–like singer who attempts to drop out of the world of celebrity while holding on to his money. The visual atmosphere, expertly rendered by **Steve Stiles**, resembles the cinematography in the late films of Fritz Lang (once described by Geoffrey O'Brien as looking like "Mondrians covered with coal dust") and the twisty plot recalls several knowing and worldly-wise EC stories, like the *Crime SuspenStories* classics "In the Groove" and "Standing Room Only."

"The Rejects" (*witzend* #4), written by Wood and **Bhob Stewart**, with art by Wood, is full of boyish charm and boyish humor — like the running joke about science fiction/science writer L. Sprague de Camp's name — and the fannish big talk ("Do you like the Rejects? They like you!"). Stewart used I.Q.'s tagline ("There are good guys and bad guys and the job of the good guys is to kill the bad guys!") to springboard his 1982 article, "There Are Good Guys and Bad Guys: A Memoir of Wally Wood" (*The Comics Journal* #70, expanded and updated for *The Life and Legend of Wallace Wood Volume 2,* Fantagraphics Books, 2018).

There was a lot of boyish humor in Wood himself, as we can see from the "free lance" cover of *witzend* #4, reproduced on the cover of this volume.

If *witzend* had a polemical point, it was that all its contributors were wandering knights of the broken lance, questing only for excellence and not beholden to the commercial publishing industry, with its restrictions and demands. The broken lance is Wood's small joke at his own expense.

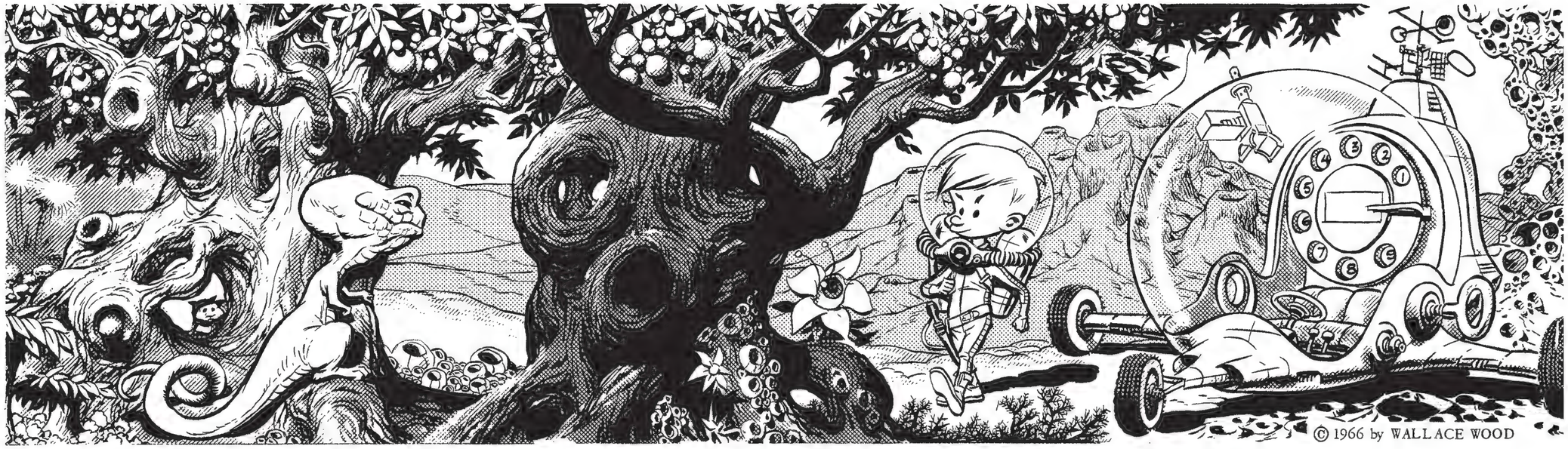
The castle, the impossibly steep winding road, and the bareheaded knight are more seriously intended. They are images of what it felt like to be a commercial artist in America in the 1960s.



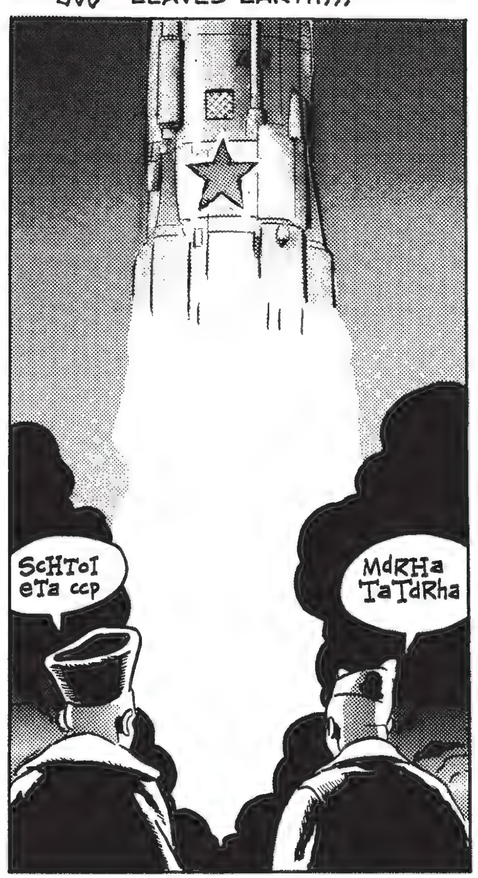
The splash panel of Vaughn Bodé's "Cobalt 60", A "Walt Kelly-on-bad-acid drawing style."

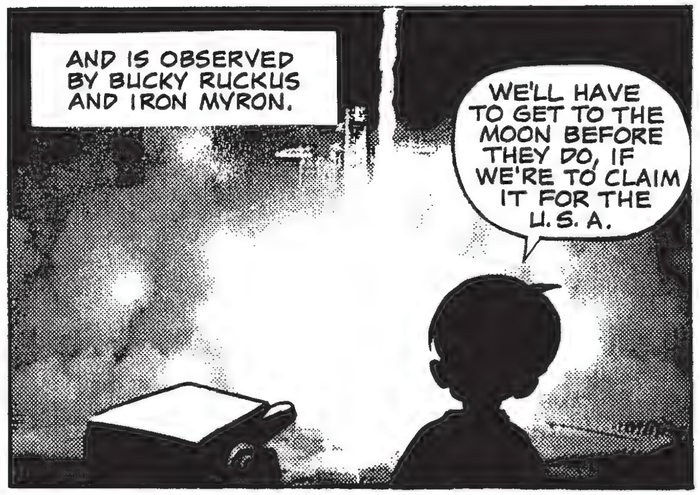
THE FANTASTIC FEATS OF THE MOST HEROIC HERO IN THE WORLD...OR OUT OF IT! THE ONE AND ONLY, (..AND ONE IS ENOUGH!) THE INDOMITABLE, THE INCREDIBLY INTREPID

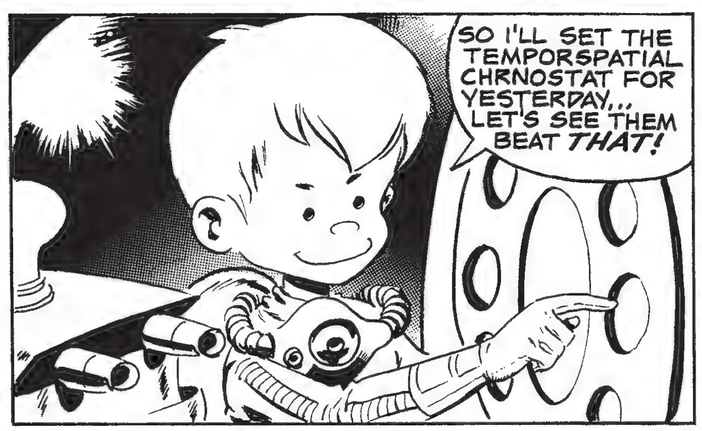
BUCKY RUCKUS™

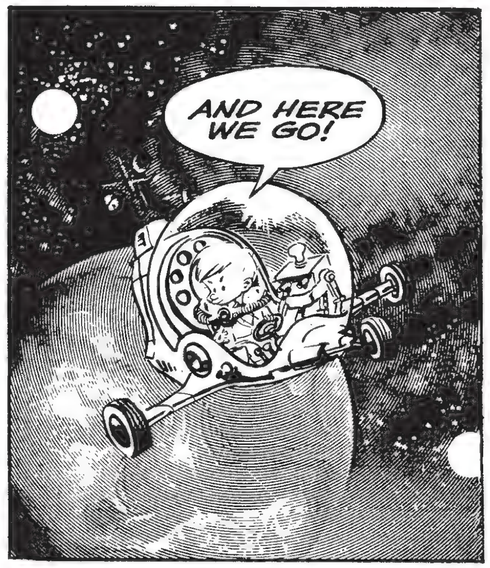




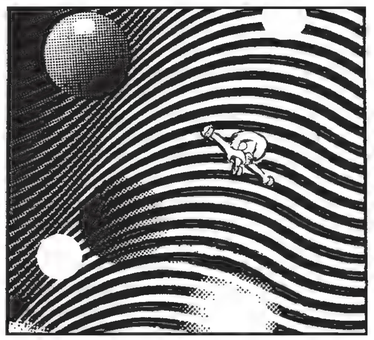


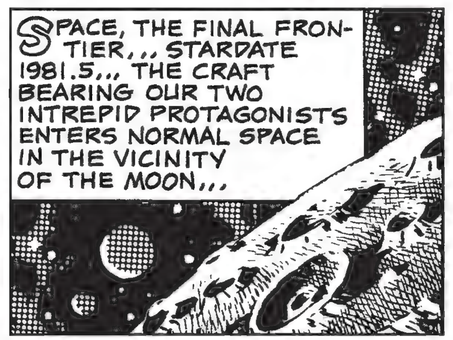






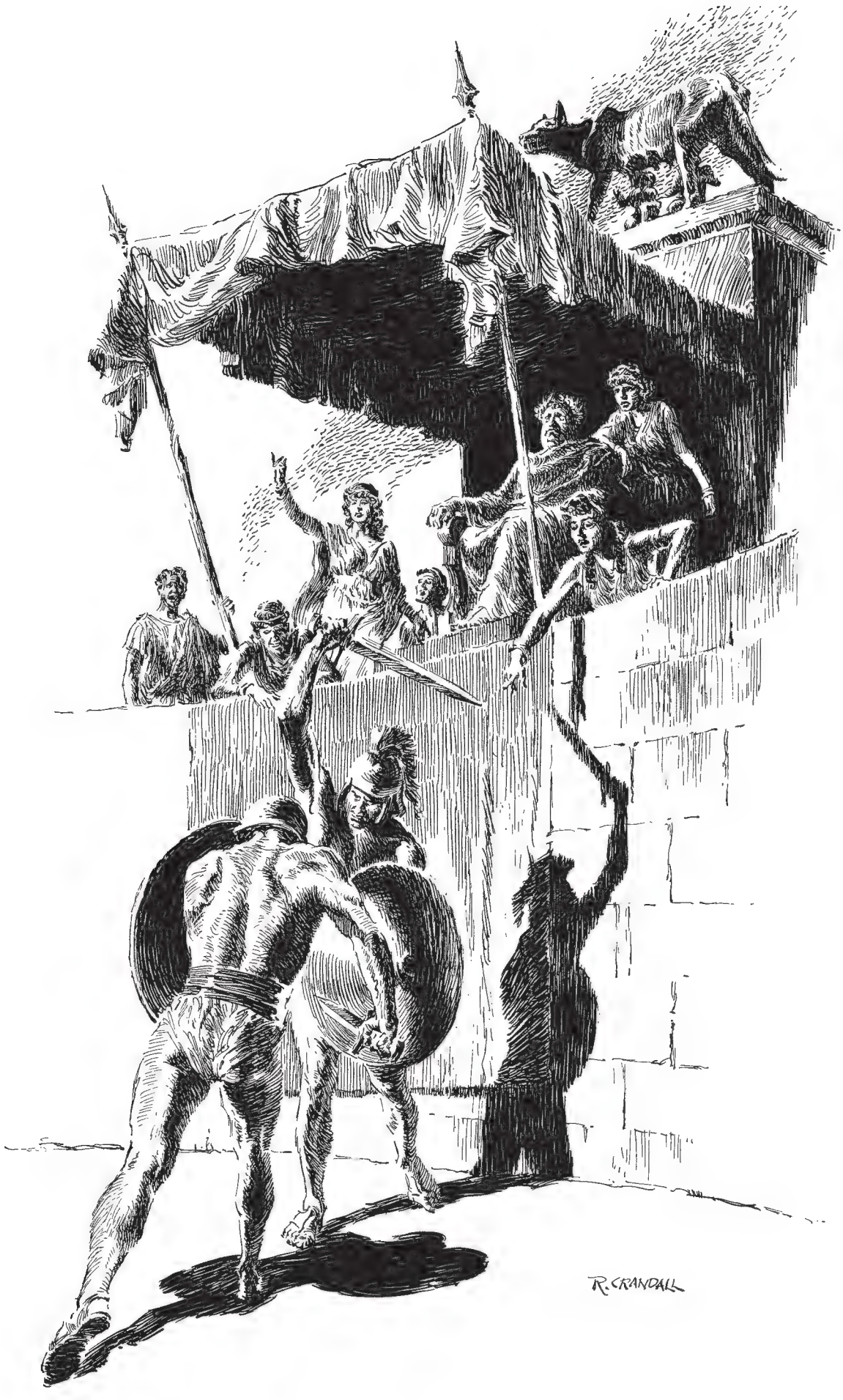






"Wood had gradually developed Bucky Ruckus, arguably his most charming trademark character, over decades. He finally got to premier his beloved creation with *witzend* #1 and used the character as an introductory mascot, including him on the cover, in various ads for *witzend*, including in the widely distributed *Galaxy* magazine, and with a gorgeous panoramic panel inside of *witzend* #1. Over a year later, in late 1967, Bucky starred in "Bucky's Christmas Caper," a seasonal syndicated newspaper comic strip. Just as Wood chose to launch *witzend* with Bucky in 1966, he closed it with Bucky, appearing as his last *witzend* contribution, in "Lunar Tunes," *witzend* #12, 1982. Here we see a montage of Bucky Ruckus appearances from *witzend*." — J. David Spurlock, Director, Wallace Wood Estate

Bucky Ruckus by Wallace Wood. Montage by J. David Spurlock.


R. CRANDALL

WITZEND, BEGINNING TO END

A memoir by Bill Pearson

I was already a dedicated, discerning 12-year-old comic book reader when I discovered a cartoonist named Wood in various titles of the Entertaining Comics group. Somehow I realized, even then, that he was a genius. Never expected to meet the man, but by a quirk of fate I became one of Wallace Wood's part-time assistants when, on a whim, he decided to publish a magazine. (An album, actually, but he called it a magazine.) He named it *witzend*. He had no experience in that area, but I had a little, having published fanzines for years, so I handled most of the production right from the start.

"Woody" derived great satisfaction creating some terrific new features, and he gathered material from his talented friends, who just happened to be some of the greatest cartoonists of their time. With unwarranted confidence, he accepted mail subscriptions for eight issues. He was a lousy businessman, and after the fourth issue he had spent every dime of the subscription money. Everybody thinks it's a joke that he sold me *witzend* for $1.00, but I proved I was just as lousy at business as he was by committing to produce another four issues.

I was making good money in those days, and I was thrilled to be working with those fabulous artists, so the expenses didn't matter to me. I lost money on every issue except the last one, the Good Girls issue, which broke even (not counting the hundreds of hours of labor I put into it) because, for years, Bud Plant kept reordering it for his growing bookselling business until every copy I'd printed was gone.

A constant criticism of the magazine at the time was that the contents were full of naked women.



Wood spent part of the space in this ad for *witzend* #2 trying to deal with customer service issues that constantly distracted him from the fun parts of publishing his own magazine.

I think it was just that all cartooning, aside from political cartoons, had been designed exclusively for children for so many decades that it was shocking to see adult material done by professional cartoonists. There was nudity and there were adult situations, but that wasn't all there was. Not every feature was a masterpiece, or even particularly good, but we were mak-

ing tentative steps toward a mature publishing genre in our spare time in the evenings, after having spent most of our days churning out superhero and funny animal comics for the big comics publishers.

The main criticism was that the magazine had no theme, no editorial direction, no point of view. Those who thought that missed the whole premise: *witzend* was an open forum. Each feature was unique, without relevance to the other contents, put directly into print without editing. I didn't like all the material Wood had accepted before I took over, particularly Steve Ditko's extreme diatribe, which spread across two issues, but I didn't cancel any of Wood's promises or obligations. To his credit, Wood didn't interfere with anything I decided to do after I took over. Everybody thought he was still calling the shots behind the scenes — it was always "Wally Wood's *witzend*" whenever it was mentioned — but except for his own contribution, after I took over, by *witzend* #9, Woody didn't know what would be in any issue until he saw it in print.

I was just a novice, barely professional at all, but Wood trusted me, so the others did too. I didn't have time to be intimidated by them and I soon discovered they weren't the demigods of my juvenile imagination, but human — sometimes delightful, sometimes deplorable, but mostly just as ordinary in person as your next-door neighbor. (The one who smiles and waves when he sees you mowing your lawn, not the one who sneers and spits when you catch him going through your garbage can.) Only a couple had oversized egos, but I won't name names.

What I will do is share with you some of my favorite memories and anecdotes, from different times and places, of these remarkably talented, yet all-too-human cartoonists. Make of them what you will.

Wallace Wood was a complicated man, not always easy to be with. But he was the brightest star at the center of my universe most of my life. For me, the brilliance of his talent has scarcely dimmed in the decades since he burst into a supernova and left the scene.

I met Woody at the midpoint of his career, about 1964. By then I'd heard a lot about him. Most of the people I associated with thought he was the top cartoonist of all time, or damn close. Like everybody else, I was in awe of his talent.

He lived with his wife **Tatjana Wood** in a walk-up apartment in the center of Manhattan. She had become a loyal assistant herself, filling in blacks (and probably doing a good deal more), in addition to managing the couple's life as best she could. It was a steep, exhausting climb to their fifth floor flat, even for us invincible young men in our 20s and teens. We were not surprised that it was sometimes days between occasions when he left the apartment.

I soon learned that his universe was his drawing board, an oversized presence with tools dangling from all sides and open bottles of ink taped to the top. Everything within his arm's reach was part of his work. Dozens of file cabinets covered the walls.

Ordinarily, Woody had a small circle of friends. He rarely entertained visitors, and he only called people for specific business purposes. At the time I met him, he was scouting for help to produce *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* for Tower Comics as well as material for other accounts.

When *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* took off, Woody rented a room in a nearby hotel and filled it with people at drawing boards. Tatjana had the apartment to herself, and I suspect it was pretty lonely for her.

In later years when he lived in multi-room residences, all the rooms, no matter how many, were extensions of his studio. He worked constantly, taking

Even as *witzend* was going into production, Wood was busy at work on *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* for Tower Comics.



fewer breaks than any of his assistants. When they went home, he kept working. He'd take naps on a couch three feet from his board. I don't think he ever had any idea what time of day or night it was.

In 1975, by then divorced from Tatjana and from his second wife, Marilyn, he moved to Derby, Connecticut, where I had just begun working as an editor for Charlton Comics. Our relationship had in many ways turned upside down. He asked my advice about his personal life as well as his business affairs, then seldom made the right decision. A classic case of being your own worst enemy.

Steve Ditko was one of the first to be told about *witzend*, and second only to Wood in enthusiasm for the concept and quantity of material he contributed to the early issues.

Wood believed in total anarchy, or thought he did, but he hadn't thought it through. Ditko believed in rigid governmental order, and maybe he still does. All I know is that the two were genuine friends, and, aside from occasional fierce debates, they enjoyed working together whenever possible.

Gray Morrow was surprisingly humble. As celebrated now as some of the other *witzend* contributors were then, Gray needed affirmation that he measured up. A worldly sophisticate, Gray surprised me by asking if I could procure some marijuana for him. I don't know why he thought I could do that, but anyhow, a few days later I called him, and he showed up with his wife. She didn't partake. She was the designated driver, hoping her husband would know who she was and be able to make it back to their car without assistance after his mind-altering experience. The Morrows had discovered their teenage son was smoking marijuana, and Gray wanted to get stoned enough to know the effects so he could discuss it with the boy based on firsthand knowledge. I'm sure it was the only time in his life that Gray took an illegal drug.

I got home late one afternoon about dusk, to find **Roy Krenkel** sitting on the stoop in front of my apartment building. He'd been waiting for me for hours and was a little more frenetic than usual. Roy, then about 40, had sold several paintings for paperback book covers that year and had made enough money that he was obligated to pay federal taxes for the first time in his life. He was desperate for me to help him fill out his tax return.

Roy and I had been close friends since the late 1950s, when we, along with **Al Williamson**, **Archie Goodwin**, and **Larry Ivie** attended private weekend



Gray Morrow made his *witzend* debut in #2 with his creation *Orion*.

figure-sketching sessions in Greenwich Village. **Paul Davis** (not Jack Davis) and **John Gundelfinger** attended occasionally; both went on to very successful careers as illustrators. **Angelo Torres** came a few times. Frank Frazetta came once, on condition that we'd all go up to Central Park to play baseball afterward. That was a memorable day for me. Williamson was single then, and he was a real wolf who succeeded in getting dates with more than one of the models.

Roy and I usually met in Manhattan because he lived far out on Long Island, but occasionally I'd visit him there. I'll never forget the day we were at his place discussing **Frank Frazetta** when Roy impulsively picked up the phone and called him. "Bill Pearson's here, and he wants to see what you've been working on. Can we come over?" Frank said his wife was sick in bed with the flu, so he'd come to us. Frank and I had met, of course, but we weren't buddies, and this was before I'd become publisher of *witzend*, so I was certainly nobody important.

He showed up an hour or so later, having thrown eight or ten of his latest paintings haphazardly into the trunk and back seat of his car and driven several miles to show them to Roy and me. He's a legendary genius from antiquity now, but he was just a regular guy then, without any affectations. His only complaint that day was that he was working so much that

he didn't have time to play baseball as often as he wished he could.

When **Steve Ditko** dropped by one day and saw what I was doing, he volunteered to help with one of the drudge jobs — addressing and stuffing envelopes with subscription copies. He spent hours at it, and that was the time in his life when he was facing constant deadlines producing two new titles for DC Comics, *Beware the Creeper* and *The Hawk and the Dove.*

It was a revelation to many *witzend* contributors that they could get their original material copyrighted in their own names, and that was *witzend*'s unique attraction for them. The catch was they wouldn't be paid for a one-time printing, but the reward was the return of their original art — along with all rights to sell their work and the characters they'd created to any other publisher. Steve asked me if it would be possible to copyright his work even if it was going to be published by a national company like DC or Marvel. He was very grateful when I pulled out a blank copyright application that would do just that, although, of course, he realized he would need to negotiate with any publisher first, to prevent misunderstandings.



Bill Pearson chose Jones's "Alien" to lead off *witzend* #6.

When I took over the title with *witzend* #5, I knew I needed help. My day job was as production manager of the art department for Admaster Prints, a Manhattan audio-visual production company. I persuaded **Eddie Glasser,** the head of the camera department and a master with the giant graphic arts camera there, to join me, and together we formed the Wonderful Publishing Company. Eddie was a valuable partner in more ways than one, but he gradually grew disenchanted when he realized we were doing a lot of work but not making any money at all.

Jeff Jones* came by after business hours one evening to make sure the printing negatives for his story, "Alien," for *witzend* #6 were done satisfactorily. Eddie set his lights just right and then, instead of making one exposure, he made three very short exposures for each page. A less experienced technician would have made a single exposure, long enough to make sure that Jeff's very thin ink lines would register. But doing that would have thickened the bolder lines. By doing three short exposures, the thin lines were subtly reinforced at each flash without overexposing the rest of the film. Jeff was very impressed with Eddie's expertise and generous in praising him after examining the result.

Ralph Reese wasn't easy to like when he was a teenager. He was a street kid with an abrasive personality and the foulest mouth of anybody I'd ever met. But Woody put up with him because Ralph obviously had talent, and he caught on to everything quickly. We got along OK once he realized I wasn't as abusive or judgmental as most of the adults he'd known had apparently been toward him. I tried to stay out of it when he and Woody got into their frequent arguments. They argued about just about everything.

After striking out on his own, Ralph developed a very tight, detailed style and went on to a successful career doing comics and other commercial work. He'd never been interested in drawing big-muscled guys in long underwear or anthropomorphic animals who wore nothing but a shirt, so when the comics industry suffered a major crash and even the top pros were not getting enough work, Ralph dropped out altogether and sought employment in the real world. He's still as talented as ever, and I wish he were doing more artwork these days.

The wraparound cover of *witzend* #6 by **Mike Hinge** is a masterpiece of graphic art. Eddie Glasser helped considerably by providing dozens of negatives

**Editor's note: Jeffrey Catherine Jones transitioned from Jeff Jones later in life. She is referred to here by her gender at the time.*

and positive cels of genuine complex machine diagrams from which Mike assembled his final design. He was one of the artists I knew who was sidetracked into comics but whose fine art talent was exceptional and should have received more acclaim than it did.

I visited Mike in his studio and was amazed at the scope of his talent. He'd designed and built a snazzy coffee table with tiny holes peppered around the sides, through which, when the room was darkened, beams of colored light streamed in a constantly changing random pattern. When the room was normally illuminated, the lights were barely noticeable. I thought it was remarkable that a machine with some kind of gears turning made no sound at all. He wouldn't tell me how it worked. It was hypnotic.

When we met **George Bush** (the important George Bush, not either of those two politicians) was selling paperback book covers as fast as he could paint them, for big money. He wasn't at all receptive to my request to use one of his paintings on the cover of *witzend* for no money. But later my friend Dan Adkins, who'd introduced us, persuaded George to let me use his portrait of Humphrey Bogart (as the character Bogart played in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*), which he'd used as a sample to get assignments from art directors. George didn't need it for that purpose anymore, and it was just sitting in the corner of his studio collecting dust.



Ed Paschke went on to a successful career as a commercial artist. One of his most high-profile commissions was the 40th anniversary cover for *Playboy*.

Dan Adkins, in the mid-1950s, was stationed at an Air Force base near Phoenix at the same time I was growing up in the area. He was in a publishing unit and in charge of a printing press, so he took the opportunity to begin publishing a science fiction fanzine he titled *Sata*. He didn't associate the name with "Satan," it was just a made-up word. He saw a letter of mine published in one of the science fiction digests and got in touch with me to see if I knew any girls. I was a senior in high school and hadn't had a real date in my life. But I contributed to *Sata* and took over as publisher with its sixth issue (notice a pattern here?). I added "Illustrated" to the title and continued it through issue #15 in 1964. Dan found his own girl and introduced me to her twin sister. We were a tight foursome for a couple of truly magical years.

A few years later, when Dan was establishing a reputation on his own as a science fiction artist, he wanted to meet his idol, Wallace Wood, to ask him to contribute to a new magazine he was planning to publish. Instead, Wood was so impressed by Dan's work that he hired him on the spot at their first meeting — and appropriated Dan's publishing concept for himself with *witzend*. He kept Dan so busy over the next couple of years that poor Dan only had time to do a couple of illustrations for the magazine he'd envisioned. Dan and I collaborated only occasionally, but through all the twists and turns of our separate careers, Dan spent his entire life striving to produce worthy artwork. He was still at the drawing board the day he died in 2013. I think I'm improving a little. Perhaps with another 50 years of study and practice ...

I could write a book about my experiences with **Ed Paschke** during our Army service, but that would include telling about a guy named Kinst (who slept in a bunk next to mine in the barracks and bragged about killing black men as a teenage gang member in Chicago) and Frank Falkowski, the nefarious ringleader of our little band of marauders (who was a nuisance to me as a misfit civilian during subsequent seasons in New York). Both Ed and I were drafted and spent most of our two years at Fort Polk, Louisiana, a training base that was hurriedly reactivated during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. It was like a long sojourn in an alternate universe, surrounded by unpredictable

aliens masquerading in human form. I remember Ed laughing a lot between globs of gloom. He wasn't a cartoonist, but he contributed to *witzend* and, even before that, to the later issues of *Sata Illustrated.* (Like Adkins, I continued publishing while I was a soldier in the U.S. armed forces.)

After his Army service, Ed made his living for a while as a commercial artist. His illustrations in *Playboy* magazine were bylined "illustrated by Ed Paschke." A few years later, when he did the cover of *Playboy's* 40th anniversary issue, his credit line read "Painted for *Playboy* by Ed Paschke."After that, his work was exhibited exclusively in art galleries around the world

When my old friend's obituary notice was published in newspapers across the nation in 2004, he was proclaimed one of the greatest artists of the 20th century.

It's sobering to reflect on the many I've known who've passed away. Some guys like **Don Newton** and **Vaughn Bodē** died too young, so bizarrely, in different ways, that it casts depressing shadows over their entire existence. Poor Don, who was a fanatic about his health, thought drinking goat milk would be good for him. He suffered a severe reaction to it that doctors were unable to cure. Finally, his heart gave out.

Others chose slow suicide. **Roger Brand** had everything going for him: his health, talent, a nice wife. But he liked drugs and alcohol. His dissolution was prolonged, ugly, and sadly inevitable. I remember little things, no matter how far in the past. We all do, I'm sure. We dredge up fleeting fragments of incidents snatched from the constantly moving events of our personal journeys through time and space. I'd thrown a party. Lots of people. My date for the evening was a very pretty girl, a freelance artist I'd met at Admaster. Nobody else in attendance had met her before. Roger, stone sober, went out of his way to insult and embarrass her. I wondered then and I wonder now: why did he do that? And why did he throw his life away?

As for **Woody** himself, all of his close friends realized he was gradually losing contact with reality, and we desperately tried to protect him. We could, for a while. But he had always seemed to me a visitor from another world who couldn't adapt as well as Clark Kent. His death was a shock but not a surprise.

Dennis Janke, on the other hand, has done quite well for himself in comics. When I was an editor at Charlton Comics, it was my job to evaluate submissions, usually arriving by mail, and send diplomatic but hopefully encouraging rejection letters back.



Kym was a real person. Here she is in costume.

I can't recall many submissions of professional quality or suitable for the kind of cartooning we needed. But one day, around 1978 or 1979, out of the blue, Dennis showed up in person, having driven hundreds of miles, to show us his art samples.

The high level of craft and creativity of those samples startled me. Taking Dennis aside so that other Charlton staffers couldn't overhear, I told him he was too good for Charlton (which would have paid him for his work) but good enough for *witzend* (which wouldn't pay him anything).

Dennis and I became good pals, shared a studio apartment for a while, and made a serious effort to sell a syndicated comic strip. I helped him get a start in the comic book industry by introducing him to other professionals. Years later, he bought a big two-story house in Maine, the entire purchase price paid in full with a single cash payment — thanks to the royalties he received for being one of the inkers on DC's 1992–1993 "Death of Superman" series that became an international phenomenon, selling millions of copies after several editions had covered the planet.

Another young artist with his own unique style was **Mike Zeck,** whose early work at Charlton Com-

ics improved steadily during the mid-'70s. He didn't need any help from me, but we hit it off, and I guess he was aware that *witzend* had a reputation for presenting offbeat but classy material by top professionals because I didn't have to beg too much to persuade him to join their ranks. I like to think the sensational ink wash splash page of his story "The Avenging Dodo" in *witzend* #12 was at least partly responsible for attracting the attention of Marvel and DC editors, who were soon thereafter keeping Mike busy as he gradually but surely became one of the foremost superhero delineators in the industry. Some of his covers for *Captain America, Batman,* and *The Punisher* are well-remembered classics, among the most dynamic ever created by human hands, in my opinion.

Kym is a real person. She was a big healthy 19-year-old child when we met, fully developed on the outside but only half-baked inside. *Wonder Woman* was on TV, and I wanted a super babe of my own. She was neither heroine nor villain in my imagination, but sort of half-and-half, so I designed a black-and-white, yin-and-yang costume, which another young lady who worked at Charlton Comics put together for us.

Nick Cuti. Ever upbeat. The first thing I did when I became editor of *witzend* was to reject his balloon-busted *Moonchild.* I still don't like her. Despite that, Nick and I became true-blue buddies, and have collaborated on many projects over the years, some mine, some his. Nick produces movies these days. He writes the screenplays, casts the actors, directs the action, is sometimes the cinematographer, paints the posters to advertise them, writes novels, and who-knows-what-else. I always enjoy Nick's company, whatever we're doing. Woody thought he was the best idea man in the business.

Gil Kane never contributed anything but this self-portrait to *witzend* but, in the spirit of *witzend,* he did self-publish *His Name Is ... Savage* and write and draw *Blackmark* during the freewheeling days of the late 1960s and early 1970s.



Richard Bassford, the number one Wallace Wood devotee of all time, bar none, spent a lifetime as a successful commercial artist who wasn't often able to sign his work or receive a byline, so he's not as well known as some of the others. A dependable *witzend* contributor from the beginning. Thanks for your unflagging friendship and support, Richard.

Bhob Stewart and I come from similar backgrounds. Small town, middle class, big country, mid-American families. We had a little talent, a lot of curiosity, modest ambitions. We crossed paths sporadically in the '60s, a little more often as time went by, and became really close when working on Bhob's book about Woody, *Against the Grain,* which has since evolved into the monumental two-volume set, *The Life and Legend of Wallace Wood* (Fantagraphics Books, 2017 and 2018), which, sadly, Bhob didn't live to see. We enjoyed swapping stories about the various production jobs, aborted publishing ambitions, and twisted relationships we've survived. I've got quite a few, but Bhob had me beat. The people we've interacted with make up an incredible list of superstars, slobs, celebrities, charlatans, and goofballs, along with a few really fine, respectable folks of both sexes, all nationalities, and every color.

For Bhob's stories (far better than mine) check out his blog, *Potrzebie* (http://potrzebie.blogspot.com), still up the last time I looked. It's one of the most entertaining and informative sources on popular and fine art over the last century and features Bhob's personal anecdotes about situations and people he's been involved with over the years.

TV evangelists, members of Congress, and used-car salesmen are easy to understand. They seek power over others and personal wealth. But how can one understand a man who obsessively seeks and reveals knowledge and wisdom without thought of personal gain? That was Bhob Stewart. Most of the material you'll find on Wikipedia about cartoonists is thanks to Bhob's research and writing. He made hundreds of entries (all anonymous, of course) and made no money at all from his blog. What an enigma. What a character.

Not everyone on my list made the pages of *witzend*. But I wish some of them could have.

I'll never forget the private seminars about the history and potential of comic art I got from **Gil Kane**, even if I was the single member of his audience. If my questions were trenchant enough, he'd go on for hours. He knew precisely each artist's strengths and weaknesses — not just cartoonists but illustrators and classical artists from every era as well.

I'll always treasure the rambling but incisive philosophical conversations with **Tom Sutton**, usually held in the dead of night, a couple hours before dawn. A mad genius, without doubt.

Earl MacPherson's candid reminiscences of his early career, painting portraits of Hollywood stars in the 1920s, were even more fascinating than details about his later success as one of the nation's premier pin-up artists of the 1940s. What a terrific guy he was. I thought he was the best of them all because he used watercolor to render the girls, which gave them a softness the others couldn't match with oils or acrylics.

I watched over **Maurice Whitman's** shoulder as he penciled the splash page of a comic book story: a fully armored and weaponized Spanish conquistador mounted on a fully armored horse fronting a lavishly detailed background, including other figures — dogs, pigs, and ducks — and a complete castle, all in perspective and perfectly composed, without any reference at all! In his book *Seduction of the Innocent*, Fredric Wertham claimed he'd found hidden pornographic pictures in Whitman's comic book artwork — which made Maurice laugh every time he thought about it for the rest of his life.

When **Lee Falk** considered hiring me to ghostwrite *Mandrake the Magician*, he received me in his penthouse apartment dressed in a floor-length rich red oriental robe and slippers. The huge, high-ceilinged room was dim, shadowy, and a little menacing, decorated in a combination of 1930s art deco and turn-of-the-20th-century classical romantic panoramas — complete with bronze statues and intricate wall-sized draperies. After a short interview, his snap decision was that I lacked imagination. He sure had plenty to spare.

My glory days were over. I wasn't bringing in the big bucks anymore. I conned comics dealer and distributor **Phil Seuling**, who promoted the annual New York comics conventions, to buy into Wonderful Publishing Company after Eddie Glasser's amicable departure.

By the time I got *witzend* #9, the ill-fated W.C. Fields issue, to the printer in New York, I'd moved back



Fanzines, like Jerry Weist's first issue of *Squa Tront*, above, helped Wood to see that there was a way to reach comics fans without going through the big comic book companies.

to Arizona, and Phil refused to deal with the printer. The printer screwed up the cover, so I spent the last of the Wonderful money to purchase full-color prints of the beautiful portrait by Jeff Jones to go along with each copy of the magazine. Phil and I argued, and he made no attempt to distribute the issue. That was the end of the Wonderful Publishing Company.

Thousands of copies of that issue and every one of the prints were destroyed in my 2004 house fire.

It became ever more difficult to finance subsequent issues, but I was determined to keep going. Somehow I convinced **Bob Layton**, a fan publisher and aspiring cartoonist, to put up the money to publish *witzend* #10. Then I persuaded **Bill Black**, another fan publisher and longtime friend, to put up the money for *witzend* #11, in exchange for half the copies. Bill's a "good girl" artist and publisher in his own right, but there's no nudity in his publications. I'm sure he was appalled when he saw *witzend* #11, filled with nudity and sex scenes. I'll bet he had his half of the print run burned immediately. I still feel a little guilty that I didn't show him the material in advance.

Oh yes, that awful 11th issue. My steadfast friend **John Benson** (going back over 50 years), one of the

most respected comics historians and critics, editor and publisher of the EC zine *Squa Tront*, who still likes me though he remains in constant despair of my silly sense of humor, asked me if I realized the issue was a palindrome. Well, yes. A 52-page palindrome that elaborate doesn't just happen by accident.

I thought it was a clever parody of underground comics, but the underground cartoonists and their readership were apparently so serious about their parodies of straight society that they couldn't take a step away and laugh at themselves. *Witzend* #11 fell flat and just limped into obscurity.

John's wife **Friedel Benson** (maiden name Bense, born in Germany) rarely comments at all about comics except to complain that John and I spend too much time talking about them. She's a very accomplished professional artist, specializing in watercolors, the toughest medium of all to master, far too mature and dignified to read vulgar pulp literature. Fortunately for John — and me, too — she likes to laugh. Laughing at the two of us has kept her contentedly entertained, I believe, but she'd probably dispute that assertion.

A genuine underworld gangster financed *witzend* #12. I'm sure it's understandable why I don't want to discuss that matter in detail. I believe I managed somehow to finance *witzend* #13, the last issue, myself. It wasn't planned to be the last. I would have kept going forever if it had been possible.

A big 100-page *witzend* #14 was almost ready for publication when all the material was destroyed in that damned fire. That includes the unlettered-but-otherwise-finished original pages and the only copy of the script for "Last Act of a Living Legend," an eight-page comics story I wrote and **Steve Stiles** illustrated about the death of a character with an uncanny resemblance to Elvis Presley. Steve had made reasonable quality prints for a friend, which he managed to retrieve, so I re-created the script as closely as I could remember it and lettered the pages for Fantagraphics Books' 2014 two-volume set collecting the complete *witzend*.

After Woody turned *witzend* over to me, a nobody, artists, writers, and would-be publishers all over the country realized they could publish on their own. So they did! Hundreds of alternative publications have sprung into life over the years. The underground comics movement evolved concurrently, and look what it's come to. Graphic stories are now respectable — even the simple-minded kids' comics we were doing. (Which are now, incidentally, inspiration for some of the most profitable movies ever made). Who could have imagined such a thing in 1966?

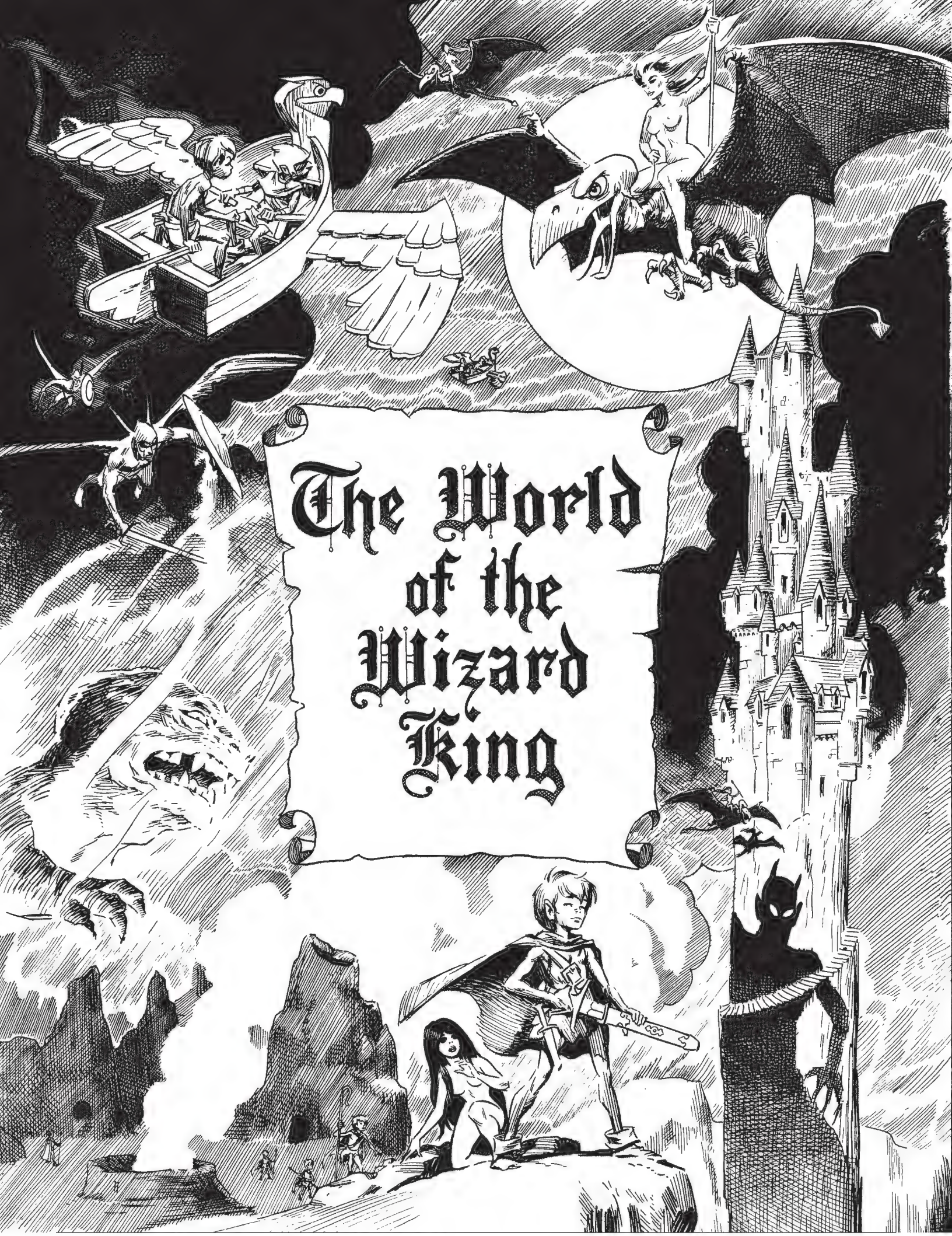


Steve Stiles never appeared in *witzend* but this story was to have been in the magazine's 14th issue. Sadly, a fire destroyed everything that would have been in that issue. Stiles and Bill Pearson worked from copies of the artwork to bring it back to life.

Thirteen issues of *witzend* spread over a couple of decades. Doesn't add up to much, but it was a big part of my life. Woody got a kick out of being his own publisher, after suffering so many aggravations with publishers, editors, and art directors throughout his whole career. But the business part of it was a hassle for him.

Unlike Woody, I believe editors are necessary as sober arbiters among crazy artists, crazy writers, and the public, which is made up of many smart people and many dumb people and a few far-too-impressionable people who sometimes manage to twist deviant ideas into deviant behavior that can become truly dangerous. I'm well aware that I allowed too many of my own inept, even occasionally despicable, excretions into print.

But I had a blast doing it my way for as long as I got away with it. I hope some of you 21st-century people get a few chuckles out of these pages.


The World
of the
Wizard
King

AN ORAL HISTORY

by Patrick Rosenkranz

As the 1960s began, the American comic book industry was suffering from financial problems and creative stagnation. Sales were down and only a handful of publishers from the Golden Age of Comics were still in business. The heavy-handed restrictions on creativity imposed by the Comics Code Authority and by dictatorial editors at the remaining comics companies limited subject matter and artistic freedom.

Wallace Wood ("Woody" to his friends) had been working in comics since starting as a letterer in 1948. He went to work for Will Eisner on The Spirit *and rose to prominence as an artist at EC Comics, particularly for his contributions to* Weird Science, Weird Fantasy, *and* Mad.

By 1966, Wood was busy putting out T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents *for Tower Comics, but that wasn't enough. Wood's imagination was being stifled. Many of his innovative ideas found no purchase in the diminished comics market. Superhero, Western, and romance comics were what the major publishers wanted and Wood's fantasy stories, like "Pipsqueak Papers," had no place to go. Some of his colleagues felt those same restrictions and were ready for something new.*

The counterculture movement had already made its presence felt, and change was in the air. Self-publishing was an idea whose time had come. Wood discovered comics fanzines and saw an opportunity to become his own boss. He could, he figured, publish his own magazine, with stories that he wanted to write and draw, and the growing legion of comics fans would support his efforts.

"We are eternally grateful ... unless we lose our shirts."

In Volume 1 of The Life and Legend of Wallace Wood, *Bill Mason recounted an exchange between Bhob Stewart and Wood about Wood's motivations for* witzend.

BHOB STEWART: What made you decide to go into self-publishing?
WALLACE WOOD (immediately and tonelessly): I got tired of seeing my work turned to shit.

Bhob Stewart, Bill Pearson, Dan Adkins, and other Big Name Fans were comics fanzine pioneers in the 1950s and early 1960s. They, and many others, had demonstrated that it was possible to produce niche publications and market them directly to comics fans. Early self-published magazines included the EC Fan Bulletin, Xero, Alter-Ego, Hoohah!, Comicollector, Squatront, The Rocket's Blast, Star-Studded Comics, Fantasy Illustrated, Smudge, Wild, Squire, *and* Comic Art. Who's Who of Comic Fandom *was published in 1964, and some of the first comics conventions were held around the same time in Detroit, Houston, and New York. The number of potential subscribers for a "professional" fanzine was growing.*

Wood had been creating comics for more than two decades by then and had many admirers who enjoyed both his old and his new work. He also produced a wide gamut of commercial art, from bubblegum trading cards to advertising to animation storyboards. Over the years, he hired many assistants to help him meet his unending series of deadlines. According to many of his colleagues and co-workers, lively discussions were a feature of Wood's



Dan Adkins first came to Bill Pearson's attention with his fanzine, *Sata*, which Pearson took over publishing from Adkins — years before he took over publishing *witzend* from Wallace Wood.

workplace. Wood kept an updated "shit list" on his bulletin board, and those names were often bandied about.

WALLACE WOOD: Most American comics are the work of slaves who take orders from publishers. There are two big companies, Marvel and DC. Both of them are fascist states, and I've been trying to escape from them all my life. I haven't done much work for them — mostly inking, just to keep bread on the table. Generally speaking, I've been pretty much free to do as I please, but in this business that's a hard place to get to. American publishers don't care about the quality of their comics; all they care about is keeping people from saying what they want to say. They'd rather have power than do things well.

AL WILLIAMSON: I was inspired a lot by Wally. It was fun working with Wally. Every time I went to visit Wally, it was a lot of fun. I'd have one of my jobs, and he'd have an extra drawing table there. I'd sit down and draw, and sketch. He was great to work with, because when somebody like Wally says, "Hey, I like that," it means something. I enjoyed working with someone who appreciated it.

BILL PEARSON: The Comics Code was still in effect and honored by most companies. The traditional comics creators had adjusted to the Comics Code restrictions for the most part, but a few, like Wood, Ditko, Gray Morrow, and others, were frustrated at their lack of opportunities to create comics for an adult readership. While the underground cartoonists became best known for revolting against the Comics Code restrictions, Wood and company had already started comics art for art's sake in *witzend*.

GRAY MORROW: As far as story content, very few comics are adult enough to hold my interest, and by that I don't necessarily mean unbridled sex, just intelligent scripting at least on a par with other media. My own opinions are the industry hasn't kept pace with readership; publishers themselves don't sufficiently reward the creative contributors. There are still a lot of markets and areas to be explored. The field itself is perhaps just now beginning to expand a little bit. Comics as we know them, however badly misused, still have a tremendous potential as an art form for sparking people's imaginations that can't be destroyed. I think there's a renaissance coming.

STEVE DITKO: I try to keep up with what is being published by the different comic outfits and to see who is doing what, even though today's efforts are a far cry from those golden years of comics before the Code and when EC was setting the standards.

GIL KANE: When you have the freedom to write and draw you can tap into something very personal, less institutionalized: evolved self-expression. It's part of natural development for a cartoonist. If economics are a factor, the choice is not always yours. You may not be given the opportunities. For years, I attempted to make an impact. But after years of submitting and selling material, it became easier to just draw.

ART SPIEGELMAN: I met Wally Wood through Woody Gelman, who really was an important figure in my life, and through Gelman, I worked with Wally, who was also working for Topps. We became weirdly collaborative at that time. I went over to his house very soon after I started working with Gelman. But I was an 18- or 19-year-old kid worshipping Wally Wood because he had done great work on *Mad*. So I really felt like a kid, a squirt. But he was very interested in what I was doing, which was very flattering to me. He said, "You draw as if it were for a fanzine but the stuff you're doing is pretty weird, and I like it."

Wood was skeptical about fans and fanzines when he first encountered them, according to Spiegelman. "Where do they get all this enthusiasm for comics?" Wood asked.

ART SPIEGELMAN: At the time I met him, Wood had lost his original inspiration and was doing a lot of hack work, and maybe his stuff in *witzend* was his last throes at making something happen. I think it had to do with not feeling thwarted by commercial concerns. The comic book companies wouldn't let him draw tits, for instance. He got very enamored of Tolkien and was reading Freud, so he began doing these things that just didn't have any place in what was then a far more rigid marketplace than exists now. It was really pure impulse, wanting to just make stuff that would be interesting to him, and wanting to find a venue. Since there wasn't one, he made one, which is not dissimilar to the impulse that got *Raw* to happen.

BILL PEARSON: Dan Adkins and I had published a science fiction fanzine for years, and Dan had a desire to create a fanzine devoted to comics. There weren't very many in the late 1950s, early 1960s. When Dan asked Wood to contribute to his proposed fanzine, Wood was barely aware of fandom. The idea of self-publishing hadn't occurred to him before, and in comic book shorthand, a light bulb burst brightly over his head. His sole motivation was to introduce new features and establish the copyrights on those features and invite others to do the same. I can't say what the motivations were for others.

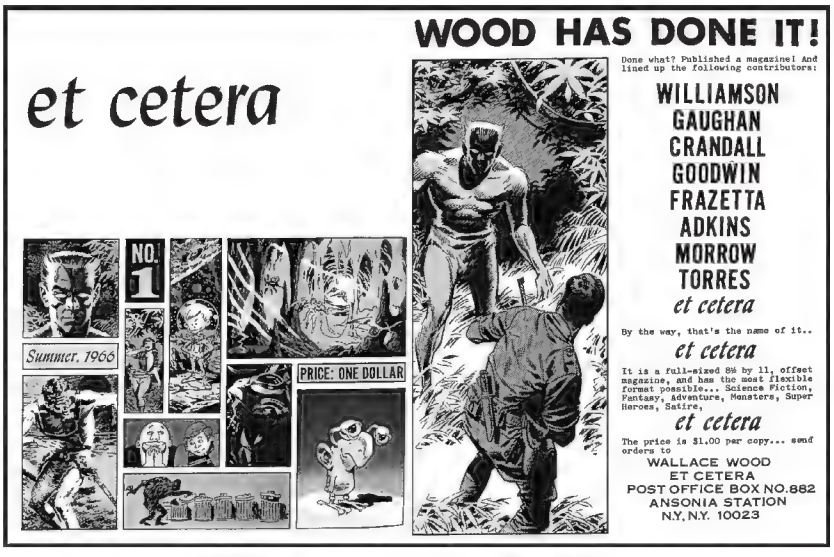
DAN ADKINS: I went up to Wally's with Pearson to get a full-page drawing from Wally for my fanzine *Outlet*. But Wally was too busy to do a drawing for me, unless, well, he offered me work to help him out! I had drawn nine pages of a war story, but I didn't show him my science fiction illustrations. Later on, I showed him my s-f drawings, and he said that if I'd shown him those, he wouldn't have hired me, because they weren't as good as the war story, which was my latest work! So anyway, I started working as Wally's assistant, helping him on the first "Iron Maiden" story in the first issue of *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*. That was around June or July of 1965.

BHOB STEWART: I don't know what kind of material Dan had gathered to do this publication. He must have been partially inspired by things that Bill [Pearson] had published in the past. I wondered as an editor if he had made much progress in putting together this material he gathered that totally fascinated Wood ... this whole idea that someone could actually do something like this. Wood was always picturing himself knocking on the doors of publishers to get work and suddenly he sees he could be a publisher and people would knock on his door. He was thinking, "I should be doing something like this." He wanted to do these wonderful things where he would not have to answer to an editor, so he probably felt that all of his friends and contacts felt the same way. He was hoping that people would get so excited about this idea that they would sit down and do the greatest thing they ever did.

RICK SPANIER: Originally he was going to call it *et cetera*. Then Wood discovered that the projected title was already in use by another magazine, and at practically the last minute he changed the name to *witzend*. This is just as well, since the latter title suggests not a trivial postscript but a desperate stretch of the imagination, a more laudable endeavor. But why was this most highly acclaimed of professional comic book artists inspired, by fanzines no less, to become his own publisher?

RALPH REESE: He had a bunch of ideas that he had been kicking around for a long time and tried to sell but wasn't finding a venue for. Things like "Animan" — that was something he had been kicking around

The first title Wood chose for his new magazine was *et cetera*, as this early advertisement shows. When he learned there was already a magazine by that name, he re-christened his venture *witzend*.



since he was a kid. He had those historical strips he did with Russ Jones, like "Cleopatra" and "Joan of Arc." He knew Al Williamson had a couple of things lying around he could use. He knew a bunch of other guys had samples of newspaper strips that had never been sold — all kinds of things like that. He knew there was a lot of unpublished material out there that guys had stuck in their closets for one reason or another. He wasn't really asking people to do original stuff. He was asking them for the stuff they had on their shelf that they hadn't been able to get published, generally speaking. Or things that had only been published in some obscure fashion, that the artist still owned the copyright. Besides that, he just wanted to take a swing at producing his own magazine — having that freedom and authority to put something together like that.

WALLACE WOOD: I find it disheartening and incomprehensible that people can't or won't do anything of value, anything really original, with comics. I think comics are a more interesting medium than film: you don't need a lot of money to bring a project to completion, and you can always put it aside temporarily and then come back to it. And comics and movies have influenced each other so much. Will Eisner, for example, must have influenced a whole school of filmmakers. Comics are a legitimate art form that's never been used, and I feel a bit self-conscious that I should be the one to attempt this experiment.

CLARK DIMOND: At his worst, Woody was a self-destructing omphaloskeptic who suffered delusions of The Big Payoff. "*Witzend* will make me a million dollars," he announced at Bill Pearson's place one autumn afternoon as the weather beckoned and we were trapped indoors talking comics. "Calm down," we said. "Is he serious?" we asked after he had left. We knew Woody couldn't edit. Indeed, *witzend* was to be "the book with no damn editor." We knew that no matter how good he wrote, his stories wouldn't reach the level of his drawing. But he could make them wet their seats! He could draw spaceships! He could draw knees! We hoped he would make it; if he succeeded, it would be an advertisement for sheer spunk. We were cynical. We were doubtful. Woody was looking for the Bigbuck Copyright In The Sky, the perfect incontestably Woodian creation.

BHOB STEWART: *Witzend* debuted in the summer of 1966, prior to the advent of the underground comics movement. The magazine was Wood's attempt to pull the comic book up by its cultural bootstraps with material aimed at adults. *Witzend* was nicely produced, with good paper and sophisticated design, combining EC alumni and other established comics artists with proto-underground cartoonists. The *witzend* reader was exposed to early work by Roger Brand and Art Spiegelman, along with Reed Crandall, Steve Ditko, Will Elder, Frank Frazetta, Gray Morrow, Harvey Kurtzman, Al Williamson, and Wood. *Witzend's* artists were able to work free from the usual mainstream restriction of the Comics Code, genre storylines, and house art styles.

Wood's editorial in issue #1 was titled "A Statment [sic] of No Policy."

WALLACE WOOD: Our only aim is to make this magazine the best, most entertaining one we possibly can. Our theory is that an artist is his own best editor, and left to his own devices will turn out his best work. We realize, of course, that human nature being what it is, there will often be a temptation to offer Constructive Criticism and Helpful Suggestions, but, as that sort of thing is inimical to our purpose, we will try to restrain these impulses. Other publications are burdened with an Editorial Policy, a Format, or a special Readership to cater to. We have no such problem, and have, therefore, come up with a product that is rather difficult to define. This first issue may be a bit misleading. It is a Comic Book — and it is not. Neither is it a Science Fiction, Fantasy, Monster, Satire, or Girlie Book. It is a platform, a vehicle, for any idea in any form. So far this enterprise has been mostly for laughs, and we hope it continues this way. If it remains fun, and a labor of love, we fail to see how we can miss, as some of the feeling we have in doing it is bound to be transmitted to you. If it begins to turn into drudgery, we will stop doing it. Life is too short!

Also in the first issue, Wood shared some of his other reasons for publishing witzend, *including artists' rights to own their creations.*

WALLACE WOOD: There is the matter of copyrights ... and this was a prime factor. Everyone in this business has given away characters and ideas for page rates, which then belong to the publishers. This will be a place to print, and therefore protect, an idea. And there is the possibility, not too great, but enough to base some foolish hopes on, that this may turn out to be a financial success. This is the time! It is now or never! The existence of fandom gave the necessary

impetus to our faint hearts, and so we want to say to all you horny-handed, ink-stained editor-publishers, demon reviewers and wild-eyed mimeograph machinists, rustling out there in the underbrush ... You have shown us the way! We are eternally grateful ... unless we lose our shirts.

RALPH REESE: He ran small ads in existing fanzines to publicize what he was doing. Basically, he was trying to take off on the fanzine market and hoping there were enough people there to at least pay for itself. He wasn't looking to get rich on it. That was always a problem — trying to build up a readership without newsstand distribution.

BHOB STEWART: In the summer of 1966, I had coined the term "underground comics" while on a panel with Ted White and Archie Goodwin at an early comics convention. "Do you mean fanzines, Bhob?" asked Ted. I drew a parallel with the underground film movement and predicted the birth of a new form. Since there were no such things as underground comics then, only a few people present — Paul Krassner, Art Spiegelman, and Wood — grasped what I was talking about. The arrival of the undergrounds confirmed for Wood that his notion of a magazine offering artists a forum for personal expression had been on target.

ART SPIEGELMAN: *Witzend* appeared right before anything called "underground comix." It tried to define a nether zone of comics that were no longer moored in a commercial context, and I was involved in making underground non-commercial comix before the contextualizing label of "underground" got coined. Some of my work was kind of surreal, some had a Freudian subtext, and it married up well with interests and concerns Wood had at the time. "Pipsqueak Papers," of course, was his particular route through where Freud, surrealism, and comics might overlap. As I became more involved with the underground newspaper scene and the stuff that was happening in the *East Village Other*, Wood was intrigued by that world and wanted to go slumming with me and know more about it. So he'd tag along with me sometimes. He was very friendly, but he was a good 20 years older than me, and when you're 18 to 20, and you have somebody who was probably pushing 50 [Wood was closer to 40], there was quite a gap there, so I never felt intimate with him, and I never worked with him in a way that Ralph Reese or Roger Brand did. I also got to hang out in his studio when he was living in an Upper West Side hotel, partially because of the Topps work and partially because of Roger Brand, whom I became friends with. I sensed that Roger and Wood had a more multi-faceted friendship going.

ROGER BRAND: I went to New York in November 1966. When we got there, it happened very coincidentally that Wallace Wood, who put out *witzend*, needed an assistant, and we had a mutual friend named Bill Pearson, who recommended me. So almost instantly, I was working for him, which meant working on *witzend* as well as a million other things. He always had a whole bunch of different things he was working on at once.

Wood was excited by the sudden proliferation of underground comix and newspapers. The East Village Other *carried cartoons by Kim Deitch, Robert Crumb, Spain Rodriguez, and many others, and published a comics tabloid called* Gothic Blimp Works *in 1968. Book publishers and slick magazines also took note and began to solicit work from these new upstart cartoonists.*

RALPH REESE: He was encouraged by it. When Roger Brand started working up at Wood's place, we became friendly with all those people. They were all fans of Wood so they made pilgrimages — Trina and Kim Deitch and Spain. They all made it a point to make themselves known to Woody and pay their respects. He was happy to meet them. R. Crumb came up to pay his respects one time. Artie Spiegelman used to come up to the studio on 76th Street when he was still working for Topps. Artie was writing a lot of stuff over at Topps, little joke books and shit like that. Insult Valentines. Ugly Stickers. All that stuff.

BHOB STEWART: I think there was a brief window when *witzend* was around before the undergrounds began to catch on. The format was different from that of an underground comic, and I don't think it was regarded as being an underground, because it was Wally Wood who did it. As long as it was coming from Wally Wood instead of Jay Lynch, then everybody would look at it a certain way. I assumed it was a New York kind of thing, but now I realize not only was he suddenly appearing at conventions, but he was doing this magazine, and, for some reason, word circulated and various people began to drop by the Wally Wood studio. In another alternate universe, nobody would have known they were welcome, but somehow people began to feel, well, we're in the underground and he's sort of like one of us, so I guess it's OK to go visit him. It was a period of time where people in New York were admiring what *witzend* was to the degree that they felt a kinship that would make it possible for them to drop

in and see him, and they would learn that other people had been to visit him, and so they would go visit him.

RALPH REESE: *Witzend* also offered complete artistic freedom. It was like an underground comic in that sense. You could write whatever you wanted. Steve Ditko was happy to have a venue for his Ayn Rand objectivist diatribes, someplace that would actually publish them.

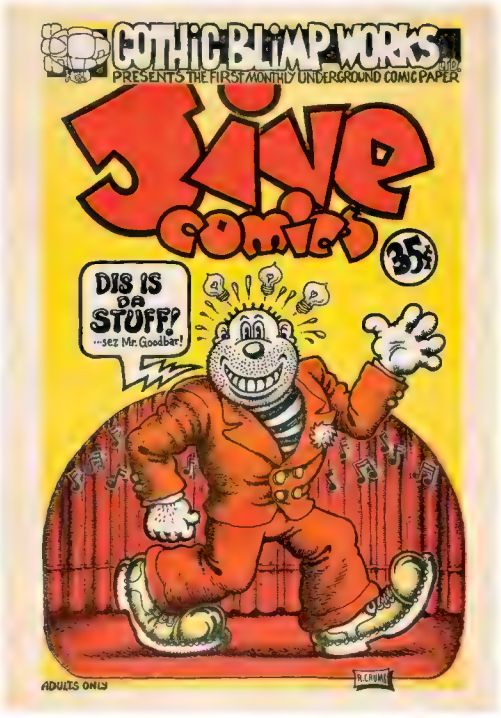
Steve Ditko's Mr. A *featured a superhero in a business suit, not a cape and tights. In a fanzine interview, Ditko told brothers Mike Howell and Richard Howell that he did not think the Comics Code Authority would allow him to do the type of stories he wanted to do. His work on* Spider-Man *paid the bills, but did not let him express his true feelings.* Mr. A *was moralistic and blunt, with lots of text and dialogue and stark high-contrast visuals.*

STEVE DITKO: The panels had to be arresting but not overly dramatic. The biggest threat and danger in *Mr. A* was not physical, but the destructive effects of not challenging lies and minds run by irrationality. Mr. A was a hero in the honest sense of the word. Strength not because of superpowers, but strength of acting upon proper principles. Not a contrived strength of muscle, but a strength of right knowledge.

RALPH REESE: Wood was against all kinds of censorship, whether it was sex or language or ideas. He was pretty resentful of all publishers and all authority figures in general. Before the Comics Code came in, there were 30 or 40 comics companies out there, in the '40s or the real early '50s, and almost all of them died because of the Comics Code. DC and Marvel were the only ones left standing. It killed the industry and put a lot of people out of work. So he hated the Code for that reason. He had his own guidelines of what he considered in good taste or what he would want his name associated with.

BHOB STEWART: With a variety of content and visual approaches, *witzend* expanded on the accepted boundaries of comics. Ditko commented that he enjoyed the artistic freedom of *witzend* under Wood's editorship. It was the way a viewpoint was presented that concerned Wood, not whether a contribution was harmonious with his own outlook. Pre-underground artists who could not get their feet in the doors of industry comics firms found the door was wide open at *witzend*.

RALPH REESE: It was one of the early forays into self-publishing and the idea of alternative or underground comics, and it was a personal statement from Wood — his vision. He wanted to do something different. He wanted to do something that was him. Pearson and Adkins encouraged him a lot and helped him to reach out to fandom, to find people to subscribe to it.



The East Village Other published *Gothic Blimp Works*, a comics tabloid, in 1968. Book publishers and slick magazines also took note and began to solicit work from these upstart cartoonists.

Wood's editorial in witzend *#2 lacked some of the enthusiasm of the first issue now that he realized how much work he had committed himself to. He appealed to readers to subscribe to* witzend, *but cautiously advised them not to order beyond issue #4, when he would make a new appraisal of the situation.*

WALLACE WOOD: It has been definitely established — this is a Hobby. And a Public Service, both to the artists represented and to you. Issue no. 1 was a lot of fun. But it was the kind of fun that can wear pretty thin if it continues issue after issue. Anticipation was a big part of it, as well as contacting old friends, making deals for ads, even carrying boxes of books from the printer was not without some gratification. But if it is to continue, and become a regular thing, I'll have to curtail some of that kind of activity. My studio has become a combination warehouse and post office, and every spare moment of my time (as well as a good part of my working time) has been taken up by WITZEND. I'm not complaining ... it's just that I'd like as much of that time to be devoted to artwork as possible. In short, I'd like to be a contributor to my own book.

In 1967 Wood designed a team of satirical superheroes and presented them to Paramount Studios for a Saturday morning cartoon program. Paramount shut down their animation department shortly after he submitted them, so he then asked Stewart to create a story using his nine characters in order to copyright them in his name.

BHOB STEWART: A half-hour animated TV series held promise. At that time, such a show would have been unique, and his juxtaposition of diverse, bizarre funny characters made the idea appealing. Paramount was interested. After I penciled the presentation from Wood's character sketches, Wood inked and delivered. And Paramount chose that same month to close down its cartoon studio (December 1, 1967). Wood was immediately suspicious, believing that Ralph Bakshi, who had headed the Paramount cartoon studio, was secretly selling the Wood concept elsewhere. "We have to copyright the characters, Bhob, so write a story that includes all the characters, and we'll publish it in *witzend*." I wrote and designed a three-pager, "The Rejects" for *witzend* #4.

BILL PEARSON: After rashly producing the first issue of *witzend* in 1966, and soliciting subscriptions, Woody really needed help. He hadn't realized what a major undertaking it was. At the time, I was trying to get into publishing, and it was just a natural course of events that I took on more and more responsibility for the magazine until finally I took it over completely in 1968 with the fifth issue. I remember the exact moment when Wood relinquished the book to me. We were debating the placement of a very nice wash drawing by the Dillons, and he suggested I simply crop half the drawing so it would fit conveniently on a layout. Without pause, I said firmly, "No, we're not going to crop it." It was the first time I had ever said no to him. He was silent, a little shocked at my uncharacteristic assertiveness, but he calmly said, "OK, you figure it out." Thereafter, although he contributed to every issue, *witzend* was my magazine.

RICK SPANIER: After the fourth issue, Wood sold *witzend* to Bill Pearson for the sum of $1.00 and an agreement that at least four more issues would be published. The arrangement proved to be beneficial to everyone concerned. Wood himself continued to be a regular contributor, and the next few issues, coming out at the rate of roughly one per year, helped to spotlight the work of some of the brighter young talents then emerging in comics, including Vaughn Bodē, Jim Steranko, Jeff Jones, and Bernie Wrightson.

BHOB STEWART: I'm thinking that Wood had this inclination that he would rather be doing artwork. I think he realized that Bill had an editorial sensibility. Certain editors have the ability to talk someone into coming up with something brilliant. I don't know that Wood would have fallen into that category. I think he was happier sitting at the drawing board and working with someone like Ralph Reese to get exactly what he wanted down on the page. It's a totally different process from suggesting to other people what they could be doing, which is the role of an editor.

In 1968, Wood published a 16-page portfolio of his commercial work to use for soliciting new assignments. It was similar in format to witzend *and could almost be considered another issue, this time devoted solely to Wally Wood.*

BHOB STEWART: I asked Wally, "Why did you do this?" And he said, "To send around to all the art directors." Sometime later I asked him, "How many art directors responded?" And he said, "Maybe two, three." That was the end of the conversation. He had thought, "I'll do something just like *witzend,* but I'll do it for professional purposes." When you first picked it up, it looked like an issue of *witzend,* but it was actually samples of his many different artforms. He must have thought, "Why am I putting all this effort into this magazine that's not getting me work? Why don't I do the same sort of thing and use it to get work?" It might even have been inspired by *witzend.* He knew the printer. He knew the printing costs. Maybe the idea came to him that this would be a way of getting jobs.

RALPH REESE: The one thing that made him different from other very talented and able artists that I worked with was that he was a teacher. He enjoyed passing on his whole way of doing things — his technique and his approach. He would take the time to sit down and explain things. He could be a tough critic, and a perfectionist about his own work and never satisfied with it. He ran like a school there for comic book artists that a lot of people studied at. He always had a couple of guys helping him out one way or the other and he schooled them all. Some of them took to it better than others.

NICK CUTI: I remember the first time I met him. I was in the service, and home on leave. I had this character called Moonchild, along with other sketches of different characters. He was publishing *witzend* at the time, and I got hold of his *Wallace Wood Portfolio,* and on the back cover was his phone number and address. It was a little room in the Berkeley Hotel and that was his studio. He







1 Michele Brand and Roger Brand in their San Francisco studio, 1972. Courtesy of and copyright © 2018 Patrick Rosenkranz.

2 Casey Robbins (left) and Trina Robbins (right), San Francisco, 1972. Courtesy of and copyright © 2018 Patrick Rosenkranz.

3 Vaughn Bodē, circa 1969. Courtesy of and copyright © 2018 Mark Bodē.

4 Jeffrey Jones (left) and Bernie Wrightson (right), 1973. Courtesy of and copyright © 2018 James Van Hise.

5 Art Spiegelman at the Topps Product Development Department, 1979. Courtesy of and copyright © 2018 Bhob Stewart.

6 Gray Morrow (left) and Wallace Wood (right) at the New York Comic Art Convention, 1974.

looked over my stuff and he liked *Moonchild*. He said, "Do something with *Moonchild*, and I'll publish it in *witzend*." Wow! Fantastic! I went running home and spent two weeks doing two pages. I called him up again and said, "I got two pages." He said, "All right, let me see it." I went to the studio and Woody looked over these two pages, and he said he liked them, said they were fine. He said, "I'll be happy to publish them in *witzend*, but the only problem is I sold the magazine. You'll have to deal with someone else, Bill Pearson." Bill looked at the stuff, and he said, "No, I can't use this."

BILL PEARSON: *Witzend* took some heavy criticism for its sexism and nudes right at that time. I was trying to change the image a bit.

A letter to the editor in witzend *#7 addressed this issue.*

GLENN PALMER: I would very much like to purchase future issues of your publication, however I'm afraid that *witzend* would have to undergo some changes before I could do so, which would probably not meet with your approval or that of some of your readers. ... The changes I mentioned would take the form of less nudity, less suggestiveness and profanity, and less violence (Mr. A!) Would it be tactless of me to say that if all these things that I find objectionable were to be eliminated from the copy that I have (#4) it would be almost non-existent? Yes? ... It seems to me that good, clean science fiction would be a lot of fun to write and illustrate, if that doesn't sound too square. If you ever get tired of being controversial, let me know.

PAUL KIRCHNER: I think that his erotic work was wish fulfillment for Woody. When he was drawing a space story with women in skintight outfits, I remarked, "Gee Woody, this one's a little wide in the hips, isn't she?" He said, "I like 'em like that." There was a look of glee on his face. He really was drawing what he wanted. He really did it in a kind of funny, wholesome way, like the *Realist* Disney poster that was so widely circulated. It wasn't depraved. It was wholesome.

WALLACE WOOD: There have always been some people who are for pornography and others who are against it, and it's a conflict that exists inside of me as well. But I feel an obligation to oppose censorship — in principle anyway. Once people have had their fill of their new freedom, I think things will take a more interesting turn. In countries like Sweden they've gotten tired of porn and nobody gives a fuck about it now.

While witzend *was a place for Wood and his pals to do what they felt like doing instead of what the commercial comics editors told them to do, the contributors held different*







opinions about sexual freedom in comics art. Frank Frazetta, who was famous for his barely clad beauties, felt that the underground cartoonists, for instance, went too far.

FRANK FRAZETTA: Women are awfully sexy as it is. I don't think you have to be explicit. The name of the game is fantasy, and if I can excite you just by looking at one of my women without anything explicit, what's wrong with that? And it has an element of class to it, it's enduring; you can hang it in a museum, you know? Call me old-fashioned, but I'd certainly like to look at the other stuff. But I won't do it myself. The key word is taste. And taste makes for beauty. When you start doing pornography, there ain't no way it can be in good taste. And for the most part, it isn't beautiful. There's a difference between sexuality and pornography. Pornography is just plain dirty. Sex can be beautiful. You can suggest it, and you can do it so it's not explicit, and yet it's sensuous as hell. You can get great joy out of it, and you'd probably be more stimulated by that than some trashy stuff.

BILL PEARSON: I was 27 years old when I became the publisher of *witzend*. Wood had confidence in me, so his contemporaries did too. As a novice aspiring artist and writer, it became the greatest joy of my life to collaborate with the most talented cartoonists in the comics industry and then, over time, collaborating with other young talents who introduced themselves and submitted samples of their work.

Pearson reorganized the haphazard layout of earlier editions and developed themed issues, devoting the entirety of witzend *#9 to W.C. Fields and the final 13th "Good Girl" issue to hundreds of images of attractive women to illustrate the wide variety of styles possible to portray a particular subject in pen and ink. He printed a letters-to-the-editor page in one issue and made an official subscription form. Later editions appeared more sporadically over longer time spans, up through 1985. Pearson also edited a publication titled* Woodwork *in 1980, financed by a fan named Bill Crouch, which reprinted all of Wood's contributions to* witzend *through issue #10, including "Pipsqueak Papers," "The World of the Wizard King," and "Animan."*

BILL PEARSON: *Witzend* was never a magazine. It had no schedule, no distribution except the relatively few subscriptions, and to people like Bud Plant or direct to bookstores. There was no advertising. *Witzend* was an album, like many publications in Europe. I was not a good businessman. Lost money on every issue, but I didn't care. In later years it was difficult to raise

enough money to publish, or I would have carried on with many more issues.

RALPH REESE: I think he [Wood] was happy that it was an artistic success. He got some really nice material for it. He certainly did his part to make it into something worthwhile, but I don't think he ever had more than 1500 subscribers. It was certainly never a financial success, and it was taking up a lot of his time, too, just keeping up with the mailing and dealing with the printer and shuffling all the materials together, so he finally turned the whole thing over to Pearson and just lent his name and prestige to it. I think he was proud of it as an artistic venture, but it never brought him any great rewards.

ART SPIEGELMAN: He was driven, not by money, although he always needed some. *Witzend* is historical in the sense that it created something new and showed that the old system was crumbling from within. The whole media landscape has changed today, but people who do comics today have the same motivations as Wood did: to draw what they want and get it published and distributed. He was an iconoclastic individual, and I admired his attitude. It had an impact on me. It helped me figure out where I belonged, and certainly not in the commercial comics universe where he did most of his work, nor in anything else around at the time. There were a few places like *Realist*, or *The Idiot* that I did cartoons for, but that was about it.

WALLACE WOOD: I worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, for years. Being a comic book artist is like sentencing yourself to life imprisonment at hard labor in solitary confinement. I don't think I'd do it again.

RALPH REESE: He wasn't rewarded as he should have been. When I see pieces of his art selling on the internet now for $40,000 I say, "What the fuck?" He was never wealthy. He struggled at times. But I don't think, deep down, he really cared about that, about financial success. He really cared about the art. It was about the work. It was about creating, just doing it. He had great enthusiasm for art and for his work.

WALLACE WOOD: At some time in the future, we may go into detail about the sordid origins of this enterprise, if we can reconstruct the step-by-step rationalization of the mental decay that took place at the time. It has something to do with Fandom, and Ego, and Dan L. Adkins. It is, of course, the culmination of a lot of futile fantasies which date back almost 20 years, to student days at Hogarth's Cartoonists and Illustrators, when there was a lot of loose talk about pooling our meager resources and putting out a comic book as a sort of co-operative. From time to time, whenever pros have gathered for a bull session something of the sort has cropped up: "Why doesn't somebody ..." and like that. Well, now somebody has, and even if the whole effort ends in a terrible financial disaster, it will have been worth it.

J. David Spurlock, Wallace Wood Estate Director, sums it all up.

J. DAVID SPURLOCK: The roots of the American underground comix movement were in fanzines, *Mad*, and EC. Though undergrounds have been compared to early pornographic "Tijuana bible" comics, the vast majority of the underground comix movement creators were directly inspired by psychedelics and the EC and *Mad* work of Harvey Kurtzman and Wallace Wood. *Witzend* has always been hard to define — the birth of the pro-zine, underground, independent ... whatever you call it, Wood's *witzend* is a milestone event that represented all of the loftiest Fine Art goals of undergrounds including art-for-art's-sake, freedom from censorship, and creator's rights. While a crucial link in the development of the underground, *witzend* was eclipsed by R. Crumb's later and eminently notable *Zap Comix*. *Witzend* was predated by a handful of micro-run undergrounds including Foolbert Sturgeon's *Adventures of Jesus* (1964), Vaughn Bodē's *Das Kampf* (1963), and Jaxon's (Jack Jackson's) *God Nose* (1964). Until *Zap*, no underground had the impact of *witzend*. Additionally, *witzend* was unique in presenting both the finest pros and hip, young underground creators side-by-side. For the young underground creators, being welcomed by idols like Wood and Kurtzman was a most rewarding validation. They were fathers to the underground.

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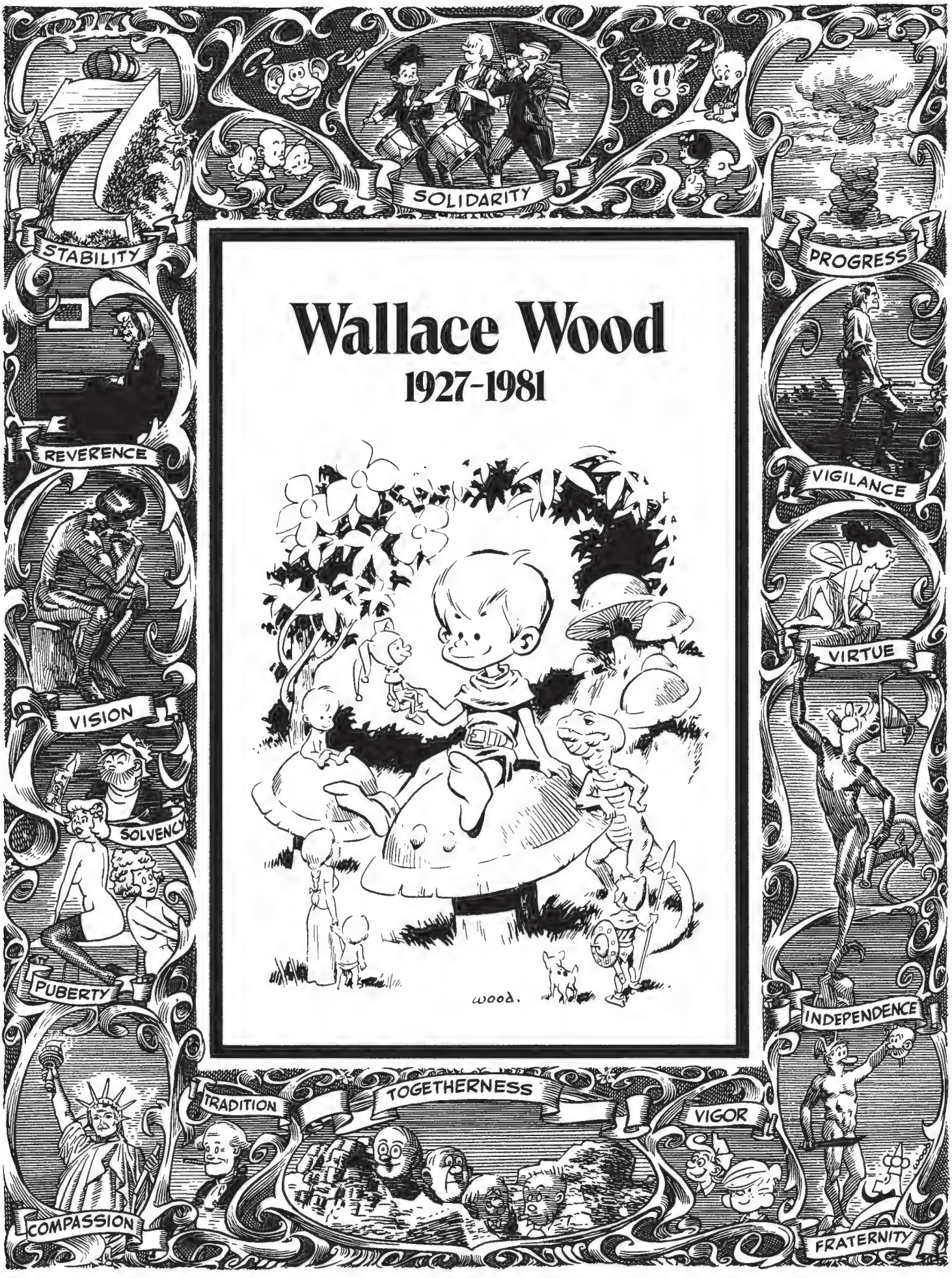
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SOLIDARITY
STABILITY
PROGRESS
Wallace Wood
1927-1981
REVERENCE
VIGILANCE
VISION
VIRTUE
SOLVENCY
PUBERTY
INDEPENDENCE
TRADITION
TOGETHERNESS
VIGOR
COMPASSION
FRATERNITY
wood.

CONTRIBUTORS

DAN ADKINS (1937–2013, b. Midkiff, West Virginia) began publishing his fantasy art fanzine, *Sata*, in 1956, while in the Air Force. In 1965, Adkins joined Wood's studio as an assistant, and worked on stories for Warren Publishing and for Tower Comics's *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents*. For *witzend* #1, he inked the cover and produced illustrations for a story and the letters page.

Adkins went on to pencil and ink for Marvel, DC, Charlton, Eclipse, and Harvey. At Marvel, he worked on *Sub-Mariner*, *Doctor Strange*, *The Avengers*, and also drew many covers. At DC he worked on *Batman*, *Green Lantern*, *Aquaman*, and *Superman*. He did illustrations for magazines, including *Argosy*, *Spectrum*, and *Worlds of If*. He passed away at the age of 76 after a nearly 50-year career in illustration and comics.

TERRY KEVIN AUSTIN (b. 1952, Detroit, Michigan) attended Wayne State University and has worked primarily as an inker for Marvel, DC, and Archie from the early 1970s to the present. His best-known work is with writer Chris Claremont and penciler John Byrne on the *X-Men*. He has worked on nearly all of the most prominent superhero comic books of the modern era, including *Batman*, *Thor*, *The Flash*, *Conan*, *Superman*, *Iron Man*, *Captain America*, and *Fantastic Four*.

In recent years, Austin has brought his slick line to such Archie titles as *Jinx* and *Sonic the Hedgehog*. In 1980, he received an Inkpot Award at the San Diego Comic-Con. Throughout the 1980s, he was frequently voted "Best Inker" in Great Britain's Eagle Awards. He was inducted into the Inkwell Award's Sinnott Hall of Fame in 2009.

RICHARD BASSFORD (b. 1936, New York City) began his career as a commercial artist after attending the School of Industrial Art. He's done advertising work for Disney, General Electric, IBM, and Nestlé. He has done gag cartoons, packaging art, and illustration. His first comic book work was with Stan Lee at Atlas (Marvel) Comics for the horror title *World of Mystery*. Bassford was influenced by Wallace Wood and collaborated with him on Tower Comics's *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents* and on a *Munsters* story for Gold Key (a licensed title based on a popular TV show). Bassford also worked with Gil Kane on Tower's *Undersea Agents*. Bassford contributed to Warren's *Vampirella*, *Eerie*, and *Creepy*, and, with Bill Pearson, drew a story published in Eros Comics's *Lurid Tales* #1. He continues to illustrate books.

JAMES R. BLEVINS (b. 1948, Ashland, Kentucky) was conceived during a screening of *King Kong* and grew up in rural Ohio. He was teaching at the Cleveland Institute of Art in the 1970s when he met Gary Dumm, Harvey Pekar, Robert Crumb, and Dennis Janke. Inspired by Crumb, he and Janke self-published one issue of their underground comic, *Flaming Baloney*, around 1975, which marked the first time their and Pekar's work appeared in comics (though pseudonymously).

"Stargazer," his collaboration with Janke (as "Z. Capistance") for *witzend* #12 in 1982, had its origin in a half-page strip from *Flaming Baloney*. Blevins has designed a number of film props, including for John Waters's film *Polyester*, and has also designed Chia Pets. He taught at the San Francisco Art Institute and at Washington state's Evergreen State College. He is retired from teaching and lives in Washington.

VAUGHN BODĒ (1941–1975, b. Utica, New York), an early cartoonist in underground comics, self-published his comic *Das Kampf* (1963) and was an editor for the underground comics tabloid *Gothic Blimp Works*. He is best known for his character Cheech Wizard, who most famously appeared in *National Lampoon*. He wrote and drew the underground comic *The Man* in 1972 through Print Mint and contributed *Sunpot* to *Heavy Metal*. Fantagraphics collected his work in the books *Cheech Wizard* 1 & 2, *Cobalt-60*, *Deadbone*, *Lizard Zen*, and *Junkwaffel*, among others.

His quirky, acerbic style was an obvious (and admitted) influence on the maverick animator Ralph Bakshi — and grafitti artists everywhere. Bodē accidentally asphyxiated himself in 1975, the result of a dangerous meditation technique gone wrong. Bodē received a Hugo Award in 1969 and the Yellow Kid award in 1975 at the Lucca Comics Fest in Lucca, Italy. He was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2006. He has a son, Mark Bodē, who is also an artist.

GEORGE A. BUSH (b. 1953) is a commercial artist, painter, and illustrator. His art was published in Marvel's *Epic Illustrated* #1 ("Detour") and #3 ("Forest Magic") in 1980 and he painted the cover of *Epic Illustrated* #21 (December 1983). Other works include a cover for *Monsters Attack* #5 in 1990 (from Globe Communications, the publisher of *Cracked*) and numerous paperback book covers. His influences include James Bama and Jim Steranko.

LEWIS CARROLL (1832–1898, b. Daresbury, Cheshire, England) is the pseudonym of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a mathematician, photographer, deacon, and writer known for his wordplay, riddles, and fantastical whimsy. In 1865, Carroll published the timeless *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which, following the turn of the 20th century, inspired no less than six film adaptations prior to the world-renowned animated Disney feature film in 1951.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland continues to provide countless allusions in worldwide popular culture and remains today as one of the most popular children's books in history. Its sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*, came out in 1871 and includes the celebrated poems "The Walrus and the Carpenter" and "Jabberwocky."

Along with his literary pursuits, Carroll also wrote books on geometry, invented logic puzzles, and created dozens of inventions. He continued to teach at the University of Oxford's Christ Church College until he succumbed to pneumonia in 1898.

HOWARD V. CHAYKIN (b. 1950, Newark, New Jersey), creator of *American Flagg!*, got his start assisting Gil Kane, Wallace Wood (for whom he penciled *Shattuck*, "a vaguely smutty Western" for *The Overseas Weekly*), and Neal Adams.

In 1977 he drew Marvel's adaptation of *Star Wars*. His best-known work for DC was on *The Shadow* and *Blackhawk* in the 1980s. He adapted Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination* into a graphic novel for Heavy Metal and collaborated on original graphic novels with Michael Moorcock (*The Swords of Heaven, Flowers of Hell*) and Samuel R. Delany (*Empire*). His first solo graphic novel was *Time(Squared)*.Chaykin created designs for the film *Heavy Metal*, then became story editor on the 1990-1991 television show *The Flash*. His 12-year TV career ended with his experience as a showrunner "on another unwatchable television series."

Chaykin is also famous ("or is that notorious?") for *Black Kiss*, his X-rated fetishistic vampires-in-Hollywood romp. Chaykin serves "as a contrarian voice" on the Disbursement Committee of The Hero Initiative and "has learned through enormous effort not to give a shit what you think."

REED CRANDALL (1917–1982, b. Winslow, Indiana) attended the Cleveland School of Art in Ohio, graduating in 1939. Much of his early work appeared in Quality Comics publications. Crandall served briefly in the Air Force during World War II and went on to become one of the primary artists for the aviator-team comic *Blackhawk*. Crandall started at EC Comics in 1953, drawing for titles such as *The Haunt of Fear, Crime SuspenStories, Two-Fisted Tales, Piracy*, and *Weird Fantasy*.

After the imposition of the Comics Code in the mid-1950s, he freelanced for Atlas Comics and Classics Illustrated. He worked on the Catholic-oriented comic book *Treasure Chest* from 1960 to 1972, while also drawing stories for Warren Publishing's *Creepy, Eerie*, and *Blazing Combat*. He drew the Buster Brown comics for Buster Brown shoe stores for many years. Throughout the 1960s he drew King Comics's *Flash Gordon*.

In the late 1960s, he left New York for Wichita, Kansas, to care for his mother. He died in 1982. Crandall was inducted into the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2009.

NICK CUTI (b. 1944) worked as an animator for Ralph Bakshi and assisted Wallace Wood on *Sally Forth* and *Cannon*. In 1973, he and Joe Staton co-created the lighthearted superhero E-Man for Charlton. In 1974, the team introduced the grubby detective Michael Mauser. He wrote for Charlton and wrote and edited for Warren and DC. His illustrations have appeared in *Heavy Metal, Analog*, and other magazines. He's worked in animation for Disney, Sony, and Universal.

Cuti came up with his personal favorite creation, Moonchild, in 1966 and published it in a French magazine. In 1968 he self-published the first issue of *Moonchild Comics*. The title was picked up in 1969 by the underground comix publisher, the San Francisco Comic Book Company. Over the years, Moonchild has appeared in comic books and illustrated novels by Cuti. Most recently, he wrote and directed her video debut in "Moonie and the Spider Queen" (2013), a short independent film. Cuti twice won Warren Publishing's Ray Bradbury award and was honored with an Inkpot award from Comic-Con International in 2009.

LEO DILLON (1933–2012) and **DIANE DILLON** (b. 1933) are American illustrators who married and collaborated on virtually all of the art they did, working on countless magazine illustrations, book covers, chapter illustrations, and children's books together. For comics, they did illustrative text articles and drawings for *witzend, The Illustrated Harlan Ellison, Heavy Metal*, and *Dark Horse Presents*. They've received many national art awards, including the Caldecott Medal, a Hugo Award, the Knickerbocker Award, and the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Award. They were inducted into the Society of Illustrators Hall Of Fame in 1997. Leo passed away from lung cancer at age 79 in 2012.

STEVE DITKO (b. 1927, Johnstown, Pennsylvania) is best known as the artist and co-creator of Spider-Man and Dr. Strange for Marvel Comics in the early 1960s. In the 1950s, he studied at the Cartoonist and Illustrators School then worked principally on horror comics for a variety of publishers. Fantagraphics has restored much of that output in its Steve Ditko Archives series. Ditko's later independent work, with additional material, has been reprinted by the independent publisher Robin Snyder.

Taken with the philosophy of Ayn Rand, Ditko created two characters in the mid-1960s that reflected his Objectivist beliefs: Mr. A (a character which Ditko owns and which he debuted in *witzend*) and The Question (created for Charlton Comics and now owned by DC).

For DC Comics, Ditko created or co-created *The Creeper, Hawk and Dove, Shade the Changing Man*, and *Stalker*. In 1993, with Jim Shooter, he co-created the Defiant Comics imprint and the short-lived series *Dark Dominion*. Ditko retired in 1998, although he occasionally freelances.

Ditko won several Alley Awards (the first in 1962 for "Spider-Man!" in *Amazing Fantasy* #15) and an Eagle Award. In 1987, he chose not to accept an Inkpot Award, writing, "Awards bleed the artist and make us compete against each other. They are the most horrible things in the world." In 2007, he was the subject of a British TV documentary called *In Search of Steve Ditko*. He has been inducted into both the Jack Kirby and the Will Eisner Comic Book Halls of Fame.

FRANK FRAZETTA (1928–2010, b. Frank Frazzetta, Brooklyn, New York) drew comics in multiple genres for different companies. He drew the *Johnny Comet* newspaper strip, 1952–1953, and assisted Dan Barry on *Flash Gordon* and Al Capp on *L'il Abner*. In 1956, he married Eleanor "Ellie" Kelly, and they had four children.

Frazetta is best known for his fantasy book cover illustrations that often feature muscular men and curvy women. In the 1960s, he did covers for Robert E. Howard and Edgar Rice Burroughs paperbacks, as well as albums, comic books, magazines, and movie posters. Ralph Bakshi animated his work in the 1983 feature *Fire and Ice*. In his later years, Frazetta's wife set up a small museum showcasing his work. His influence is far-reaching and continues to be cited by multimedia creators. He died from complications after a stroke at age 82.

Frazetta is the subject of a 2003 documentary, *Frazetta: Painting with Fire*. He won a Hugo Award and multiple World Fantasy Awards, three Chesley Awards, and the Spectrum Grand Master of Fantastic Art Award. He was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 1995 and the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame in 1999.

RICHARD JOSEPH "DICK" GIORDANO (1932–2010, b. New York City) is perhaps best known as a comic book inker, particularly on the work of Neal Adams on *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* and *Batman* for DC Comics, but much of the work he did in comics was as an editor. After attending the School of Industrial Art, he freelanced for Charlton comics, working on numerous titles throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In 1965, he became the company's executive editor and reshaped Charlton's offerings by adding the "Action Hero" line, which included *The Question* by Steve Ditko. Ditko later recommended him for an editorial post at DC Comics and Giordano was hired as a DC editor in 1968. He left to form Continuity Studios with Neal Adams in 1971, while continuing to do freelance inking, mainly for DC. He returned to DC in 1980 as an editor and was eventually made Vice President/Executive Editor. He left again in 1993 and returned to freelancing.

He was the recipient of an Alley Award for Best Editor and several Shazam Awards for Best Inker. Known for opposing creators' rights while a DC executive, in the mid-2000s he joined the board of directors for the cartoonist charity that would become the Hero Initiative. The Initiative's Dick Giordano Humanitarian of the Year Award was created in his honor in 2010.

ARCHIE GOODWIN (1937–1998, b. Kansas City, Missouri) is best known as an editor and writer for Warren, DC, and Marvel Comics. For Warren, in the 1960s, he wrote for and edited *Creepy, Eerie,* and *Blazing Combat,* and revamped Vampirella, turning her into a more dramatically realized character. For DC in the early 1970s, he distinguished himself as editor of several war titles and later as editor of *Detective Comics,* where he co-created (with Walter Simonson) *Manhunter* in 1973–1974. He served briefly as editor-in-chief at Marvel (1976–1977) where he also worked on *Star Wars,* co-created *Luke Cage* and *Spider-Woman,* and helmed *Epic Illustrated,* one of the company's rare creator-owned series. He engineered the Marvel Graphic Novel line in the early 1980s, and helped create Marvel's New Universe with Jim Shooter.

He also wrote comic strips, notably *Secret Agent Corrigan* (a.k.a. *Secret Agent X-9*) and *Star Wars,* both drawn by Al Williamson. His 1979 graphic novel adaptation of the movie *Alien* with Walter Simonson for Heavy Metal Communications became the first graphic novel to make the *New York Times* best-seller list. He returned to DC as an editor in 1989 and remained there until his death from cancer in 1998.

Goodwin won multiple Shazam Awards for his writing, particularly for the Manhunter series, and was honored with an Eisner Award for Best Editor in 1993. He was awarded the Eisner Award's Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award in 1992, and its Bill Finger Award in 2008. He was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 1998 and the Oklahoma Cartoonists Hall of Fame in 2007.

MIKE HINGE (1931–2003, b. Auckland, New Zealand) was a graphic designer and illustrator. His work appeared in numerous fanzines, as well as on the covers of the science fiction magazines *Amazing Science Fiction, Fantastic,* and *Analog*. He also illustrated two *Time* magazine covers: portraits of Japanese emperor Hirohito (1971) and Richard Nixon (1973), both of which are currently held by the Smithsonian. In 1971 he provided the cover art for *witzend* #8. He was nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Professional Artist, and was nominated for a Locus Award six times.

DENNIS JANKE (b. 1950, Cleveland, Ohio) is best known as an inker, mainly for DC and Marvel. He co-published the underground comic book *Flaming Baloney* with J.R. Blevins circa 1975. For *witzend* #12, using the name "Z. Capistance," he collaborated with Blevins on "Stargazer," a follow-up to a feature in *Flaming Baloney*. Under his own name, he illustrated the cover and other illustrations for *witzend* #13, the "Good Girls" issue. Janke inked *Superman* for DC Comics, including the "Death of Superman" series in 1992–1993. He has also worked on *Batman* and *Captain America,* among others.

Upon reading *witzend* editor Bill Pearson's account of their first meeting (see "Beginning to End"), he remarked, "Why Bill, you crafty son-of-a-gun! I didn't know Charlton would have paid me to do something. Actually, what [you] told me was they had gone out of business." Janke lives in Maine.

JEFFREY CATHERINE JONES (1944–2011, b. Jeffrey Durwood Jones, Atlanta, Georgia) changed her name to Catherine when she transitioned from male to female around 1998. Jones's versatile style led to success in the paperback book market where she painted covers for many genres, from gothic to adventure to black comedy. In 1967, she started her comics career in Warren Publishing's *Creepy* and *Eerie* and later drew stories for *Vampirella* as well. For the latter, she also painted a cover in collaboration with Vaughan Bodē.

For *witzend* #6 (1969), she drew "Alien," a six-page story. In 1972, she began her long-running *Idyl* serial, which was published in every issue of *National Lampoon* until mid-1975. That same year, Jones was one of the founders of The Studio, a group that produced posters, portfolios, and illustrations for different publishers. Also in the 1970s, she wrote and drew *Spasm* #1 for Last Gasp. In the 1980s, she was the "I'm Age" artist in *Heavy Metal*. Her works have been reprinted in *Yesterday's Lily* (1980) from Dragon Dreams and *Age of*

Innocence (1994) from Underwood Books. Jones won a World Fantasy Award in 1986.

ROBERT "BOB" T. MCLEOD (b. 1951, Tampa, Florida) got his start at Continuity Associates Studio in the 1970s. He is best known for co-creating the *New Mutants* title for Marvel, as well as his inking on titles such as *Amazing Spider-Man, Crazy, X-Men,* and *Action Comics.*

DWIGHT GRAYDON "GRAY" MORROW (1934–2001, b. Fort Wayne, Indiana) co-created *Man-Thing* for Marvel and *El Diablo* for DC. He illustrated the 1978 graphic album, *The Illustrated Roger Zelazny,* and his own sword-and-sorcery graphic album, *Orion* (begun in the pages of *witzend*), which was published posthumously in 2012.

Morrow moved to New York City in 1955 after having attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts but it wasn't until after a stint in the Army that he developed steady work from venues such as *Cracked,* Gilberton's Classics Illustrated, Atlas/Marvel, and a line of children's books. He also drew for science fiction digests including *Galaxy* and *If.* Over the course of his career, he worked for Archie, DC, Marvel, Eclipse, NBM, and Dark Horse. He illustrated science fiction paperbacks and drew the *Tarzan* Sunday and *Buck Rogers* daily and Sunday newspaper strips. He art-directed Charlton's *Space: 1999* and contributed to Warren's *Creepy, Eerie,* and *Blazing Combat.* He also appeared in *Heavy Metal, National Lampoon,* and *Playboy.* In addition to *Orion,* he contributed "The Journey," written by his first wife Betty, and several illustrations to *witzend.*

Morrow, who suffered from Parkinson's Disease, died by gunshot. Married twice, he had children, some adopted. He was nominated for a Hugo Award three times and inducted into the Oklahoma Cartoonists Associates Hall of Fame in 2005.

JOHN P. NORTON (b. 1960) drew "The Real World" in *witzend* #12. He founded Norton Illustrations, focused on biology and nature education. His art has been exhibited at nature centers and museums. In 1988, he was a visiting instructor at Clemson University's biology program. In 1991 he served as an artist in residence at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. He provided illustrations for *Joy of Cooking: 75th Anniversary Edition* (2006) and the Chicago Field Museum's "Ancient Americas" exhibit (2007). His cartoons can be found in *Natural History* magazine.

EDWARD FRANCIS PASCHKE (1939–2004, b. Chicago, Illinois) was a Polish-American who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago. A fine artist who worked in oils, his work is displayed in the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, among other institutions. He taught at Northwestern University. He was married and had two daughters.

WILLIAM "BILL" PEARSON (b. 1938, Belle Fourche, South Dakota) was educated at the School of Visual Arts, and began work as a technical illustrator for commercial industries and for the military, where he drew weapons diagrams. He got his start in comics in the 1960s as an assistant to Wallace Wood on *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents.* He took over *witzend* from Wood beginning with *witzend* #5 and guided the magazine through the end of its run.

Pearson worked as associate editor and writer at Charlton in the 1970s and 1980s, using the pen name "Wild Bill." He has written for Warren, Gold Key, King Comics (*Flash Gordon*), Eclipse, and Gladstone. In addition, he has edited several compilations of Wood's work.

A house fire in 2004 destroyed all of what would have been *witzend* #14, along with most of Pearson's extensive archives of Wood's papers and artwork.

Pearson has authored two novels, *Drifter's Detour* (2007), illustrated by several *witzend* alumni, and *Dancing Partners* (2010), a Hollywood romp about a race to secure the world's only print of a lost Fred Astaire movie. He lives in Arizona.

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809–1849, b. Boston, Massachusetts) looms large as one of the most prominent writers and poets in American literature. After one semester at the University of Virginia, failing out of West Point, and suffering a line of personal tragedies, Poe began publishing poetry and short stories in New England newspapers and literary journals. Poe is credited as being the father of "noir" detective fiction with "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and established himself as a master of gothic horror with stories such as "The Tell-Tale Heart."

A Poe museum is located in Baltimore, Maryland (where his poem "The Raven" is also the inspiration for the name of that city's professional football team). The Mystery Writers of America gives out the "Edgar Award" each year. Poe's death in 1849 at the age of 40 is cloaked in mystery, much like his notorious tales.

RALPH REESE (b. 1949, New York City) is best known for *One Year Affair* — a strip he drew for *National Lampoon* — and its sequel, *Two Year Affair,* as well as for his work on the *Flash Gordon* newspaper strip.

At 16, while Reese was attending the High School of Art and Design in New York, he began assisting Wallace Wood. He contributed the cover and "Barf the Insurance Salesman" for *witzend* #8 (1971) and several poems and illustrations in other issues. His work also appeared in underground comix, including *Bijou Funnies* and *Conspiracy Capers.* By the 1970s, he was working at Continuity Studios and worked on projects for Children's Television Workshop.

In the 1980s and 1990s, he worked on Marvel's *Conan* series and the comic book adaptation of the 1982 movie *Blade Runner.* In the 1990s, he contributed to Valiant's *Magnus Robot Fighter,* among other titles, and to DC's *Big Book of...* series. He has drawn for Acclaim, DC, Eclipse, Marvel, Skywald, and Warren, as well as *National Lampoon* and *Esquire.* He won the Shazam Award for Best Inker (Humor Division) in both 1973 and 1974.

JOHN ADKINS RICHARDSON (b. 1929, Gillette, Wyoming) holds a doctorate from Columbia University and is Professor Emeritus of Art and Design at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. He's been a commercial illustrator and a sports cartoonist, and is best known for *The Complete Book of Cartooning* (1977), as well as other how-to cartooning books. His underground comics contributions include his adaptation of Lewis Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark," which appeared in *witzend* #8 in 1971, and "The Unicorn Quest" in Kitchen Sink's *Fever Dreams* #1.

PHILLIP "P." CRAIG RUSSELL (b. 1951, Wellsville, Ohio) graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a degree in painting. The first openly gay mainstream cartoonist, Russell got his start working on *Killraven* and *Dr. Strange* for Marvel. He is well known for his many adaptations of existing works into comics, including Michael Moorcock's *Elric*, more than ten operas or songs (Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Strauss's *Salome*, and Wagner's *The Ring of The Nibelung* among them), and Oscar Wilde's fairy tales. He has collaborated with Neil Gaiman on such projects as *Sandman* and the *Coraline* comic book. Russell is still active in comics, releases how-to art videos, and is the subject of the 2007 documentary *Night Music*. He has won multiple Eisner awards.

WALTER "WALT" SIMONSON (b. 1946), perhaps best known for his 1980s run on *Thor*, graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1972, where he produced his serial comic *Star Slammers* as a part of his thesis. In 1973 he teamed with Archie Goodwin on *Manhunter* in *Detective Comics*, which won them both multiple Shazam awards. For *Heavy Metal*, he and Goodwin adapted the movie *Alien* into a graphic novel, which became the first graphic novel to make the *New York Times* best-seller list. He has worked for most of the major comic book publishers as a writer and artist.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Simonson won several Haxtur Prizes, primarily for his work on *Thor* and *Orion*. In 2010 he received the Hero Initiative Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2012 and 2013, Simonson received an Eagle Award, two Eisner Awards, and three Harvey Awards for new editions of his work on *Thor* and *Alien*.

He was inducted into the Will Eisner Hall of Fame in 2017. In 2018, Asteroid 53237 Simonson was named in his honor. He lives in New York State with his wife, the comic book writer and editor Louise Simonson.

KENNETH R. SMITH (b. 1943, Austin, Texas) is an author, artist, columnist, and retired professor of philosophy. A graduate of the University of Texas, he began graduate school there but completed his Ph.D at Yale. His early fantasy art appeared in *witzend*, *Spa Fon*, *Squa Tront*, and *Fantastic Fanzine*. He produced cover art for fantasy and science fiction paperbacks, and Warren's *Creepy* and *Eerie*. Between 1971 and 1977, he self-published five issues of the highly regarded *Phantasmagoria*, a magazine of his own calligraphed fantasy stories and art, while teaching at Louisiana State University in the Philosophy and Honors departments. He resigned in 1983 "in disgust over the pallid complexion of mind among academics and their perfunctory educational standards."

His stories and art have appeared in *Heavy Metal*, Eros Comix's *Succubus*, the fantasy anthology *Sorcerers*, Ray Bradbury's *Dinosaur Tales*, the children's books *The Bat Family* and *The Rebus Bears*, and elsewhere. He has published the philosophy books *Otherwise* (1998) and *Webs* (2000), which challenge entrenched patterns of modern thought and culture, and a considerable numbers of prints, graphics, and portfolios from *Phantasmagoria*. He is a longtime columnist for *The Comics Journal*. Smith is currently working on several philosophy projects and a series of art books collecting his private horror, science fiction, fantasy, and other artwork. He resides in Texas.

ART SPIEGELMAN (b. 1948, Stockholm, Sweden) immigrated to the U.S. as a child and was a professional cartoonist by high school. He co-created the underground comics anthology *Arcade* (1975–1976). In 1980 he and his wife, Françoise Mouly, founded *Raw*, a magazine showcasing alternative cartoonists.

In 1972, Spiegelman began serializing *Maus*, the story of his family (drawn as mice) during the Holocaust. Collected as a graphic novel in 1986, with Part II released in 1991, *Maus* won him a Pulitzer Prize as well as an Eisner and a Harvey. He won the Grand Prix at Angoulême and was named one of *Time's* Top 100 Most Influential People of 2005. After a decade with the *New Yorker*, he and Mouly launched the Toon children's book imprint.

JOE STATON (b. 1948, Tennessee) co-created *E-Man* with Nicola Cuti. He co-created *The Huntress* with Paul Levitz and the *Omega Men* with Marv Wolfman. In 1972–1973 he was an assistant to Gil Kane. He has worked for Charlton, DC, Marvel, and Warren. At DC he penciled the *Justice Society of America* revival for *All Star Comics*. He drew the *Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Power Girl*, *Huntress*, *Superboy*, *Doom Patrol*, *Metal Men*, and *Green Lantern*. In the mid-1980s Staton served as art editor for First Comics. Back at DC, he worked with Steve Englehart on *Green Lantern Corps* and *Millennium* (1988). He has also drawn *Scooby Doo* and *Jughead*. He drew a graphic novel adaptation of Ayn Rand's *Anthem*. Staton won an Eisner Award in 1998. In 2011 he and writer Mike Curtis took over the *Dick Tracy* newspaper strip. They won a Harvey Award for their work on it in 2013 and an Akron Comicon Excellence Award in 2016.

JAMES "JIM" F. STERANKO (b. 1938, Reading, Pennsylvania) first garnered notice for his artwork on *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* in 1966 for his graphic design and the infusion of contemporaneous fine art movements. He followed with runs on *X-Men* and *Captain America*.

In 1969 he started Supergraphics, which published two volumes of his *History of Comics*. In 1972 Supergraphics began publishing *Comixscene*, which became *Prevue* and continued until 1994. He designed the iconic look of Indiana Jones for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. He also did conceptual design for other films including Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. He has painted numerous paperback book covers.

He has won multiple awards in America and Europe, including six Alley Awards, a Shazam Award, the Academy of Comic Books Arts Special Recognition Award of 1972, and DragonCon's Julie Award in 2003. He was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2006.

BHOB STEWART (1937–2014, b. Meridian, Mississippi) succeeded Vaughn Bodē as editor of *Gothic Blimp Works* and coined the term "underground comics" in 1966. He published *The EC Fan Bulletin*, the first EC fanzine, in 1953 and co-edited the science fiction fanzine *Xero*, which won a Hugo Award. He devised Wacky Packages and other humor products for Topps. He was instrumental in arranging the first major American museum comic art exhibit. He wrote on movies and comics for *Heavy Metal* (where he also coined the word "flix" in 1979) and *Publishers Weekly*. He devoted 30 years to *The Life and Legend of Wallace Wood*, which was published posthumously in two volumes by Fantagraphics Books in 2017 and 2018.

STEVE STILES (b. 1943) published his first cartoon in a science fiction fanzine in 1959 and made his professional debut in Paul Krassner's *The Realist* in 1961. While working as an advertising artist from 1964 to 1976 and a staff artist for *The Baltimore Sun* in 1981, Stiles contributed to underground magazines and fanzines. Much of his early work was featured in Kitchen Sink Press magazines such as *Barf, Bizarre Sex,* and *Dope Comix*. He also published his own magazine, *Hyper Comics,* while working as a penciler for Marvel UK. Stiles has worked in various capacities for a multitude of publishers, among them Marvel, DC, Topps, and Warren Publications. In addition, he spent 10 years as an illustrator for Mark Schultz's award-winning *Xenozoic Tales.*

When Stiles illustrated "Last Act of a Living Legend" for Bill Pearson, they intended it to see print in *witzend* #14. But the artwork was lost in Pearson's 2004 house fire. Stiles remembered he'd made copies for a friend and Pearson reconstructed his script for this book.

Stiles was the recipient of the first Rotsler Award and has won a Harvey Award and eleven Fan Activity Achievement awards. He has been nominated multiple times for the Hugo Award for Best Fan Artist and won the award in 2016.

ALEX TOTH (1928–2006, b. New York City) got his start as a freelance illustrator at the age of 15. After high school, Toth worked on Golden Age DC characters Green Lantern, The Atom, Dr. Mid-Nite, and The Flash. In the early 1950s, he did superb work on three EC war stories for Harvey Kurtzman and then, in 1965 and 1966, followed them up with three equally superb war stories for Warren's *Blazing Combat*. Toth was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1954. While stationed in Japan, he worked on his own adventure newspaper strip: *Jon Fury.*

Though Toth's comics are influential, particularly among other cartoonists, he is also known for his animation designs for Hanna-Barbera, for shows such as *Super Friends, Space Ghost,* and *Birdman*. In 1990, Toth was inducted into the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame. He died at his drawing table in 2006.

GUYLA AVERY TOTH (1927–1985, b. Guyla Alleman) worked at Hanna-Barbera where she met her second husband, Alex Toth. She and Alex collaborated on "39/74" for *witzend* #10.

ALFONSO "AL" WILLIAMSON (1931–2010, b. New York City) attended Burne Hogarth's Cartoonists and Illustrators School. At EC Comics, he distinguished himself for his science fiction work. In the 1960s, he did outstanding work for Warren's *Creepy, Eerie,* and *Blazing Combat,* as well as a notable three-issue run on King's *Flash Gordon*.

From 1967 to 1980, he and writer Archie Goodwin teamed up on the newspaper strip *Secret Agent Corrigan* (a.k.a. *Secret Agent X-9*). In the early 1980s, he drew comic book adaptations for *Star Wars, Blade Runner,* and other movies. He also drew the daily and Sunday *Star Wars* newspaper strip, scripted by Goodwin, from 1981 to 1984.

After a brief stint inking at DC, he began inking for Marvel, finally retiring in 2002 when his health began to decline. He was married twice and had three children. He won a National Cartoonists Society Award for his King *Flash Gordon* work and numerous Alley, Eisner, and Harvey awards. He was inducted into the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2000.

WALLACE "WALLY"/"WOODY" ALAN WOOD (1927–1981, b. Menahga, Minnesota) is universally renowned for his science fiction stories for EC Comics, for his significant contributions to the formative years of *Mad,* and for his "Panels That Always Work," a highly prized, concentrated primer for cartoonists. He created the spy strip *Cannon,* the adventure series *Sally Forth,* the comic book series *T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents,* and made significant creative contributions to *Daredevil, Mars Attacks,* and *Power Girl*. A veteran of World War II, he began work in 1948 as a letterer and assistant to Will Eisner. Wood's art graced not only comic books and comic strips, but record album covers, trading cards, posters, ads, TV, and much more.

In 1966 Wood began publishing *witzend,* a landmark "zine" that published comics created and owned by the medium's top talents and hip, young newcomers alike. With the fifth issue, Wood handed over stewardship of the magazine to Bill Pearson. Wood's personal affairs were troubled — he was a chain-smoker, an alcoholic, and he was divorced twice. In 1981 after multiple strokes and daunted by the prospect of dialysis for the rest of his days, he ended his life.

Despite his troubles, Wood is one of the most accomplished talents in the history of comics. He was the recipient of the National Cartoonists Society's Best Comic Book award in 1957, 1959, and 1965. He garnered two Alley Awards, a Best Foreign Cartoonist Award (Angoulême International Comics Festival, 1978), multiple Hugo Award nominations, and has been inducted into the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame, the Inkwell Hall of Fame, and the Will Eisner Comic Book Hall of Fame.

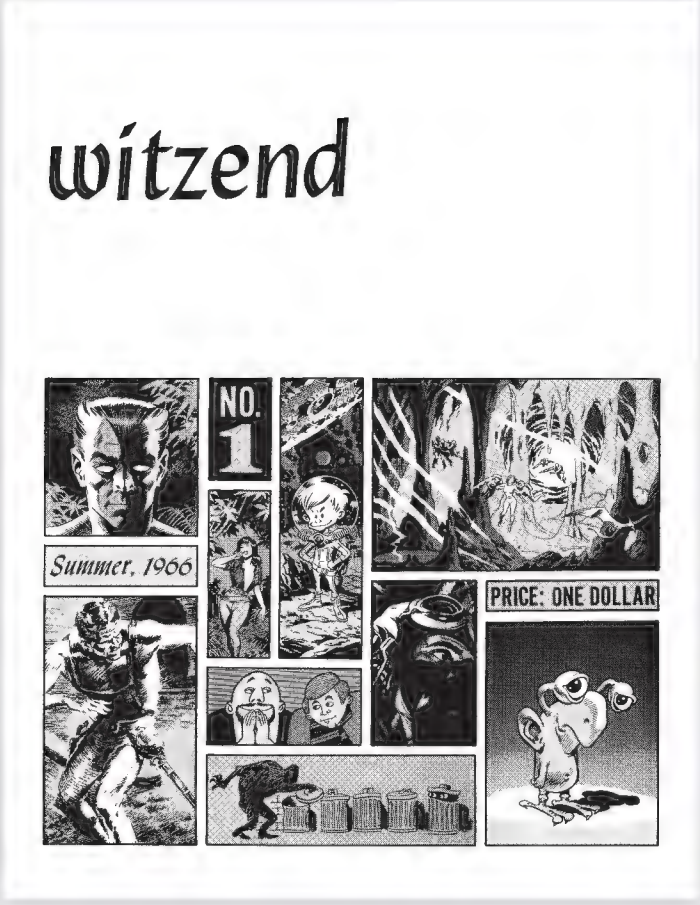
BERNARD ALBERT "BERNI(E)" WRIGHTSON (1948–2017, b. Baltimore, Maryland) made his mark on comics via his stylized horror art. He is perhaps best known as the co-creator (with Len Wein) of *Swamp Thing*. He has illustrated Stephen King novels (*The Stand, Cycle of the Werewolf, The Dark Tower*) and drew the graphic novel adaptation of *Creepshow,* a film based on King's work. He also drew the Spider-Man graphic novel *Hooky*. He famously devoted years to produce more than 50 highly detailed drawings for an illustrated edition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. He created character designs for the film *Ghostbusters* and painted the cover art for Meat Loaf's *Dead Ringer* record album.

Wrightson contributed two one-page installments of his strip *Limpstrel* for *witzend* #7 in 1970. The following year, in the spirit of *witzend,* he published a collection of his own comics work, *Badtime Stories*. Wrightson received numerous honors, including four Shazam Awards, the Bob Clampett Humanitarian Award, An H.P. Lovecraft (Howie) Award, and a National Cartoonists Society award.

MICHAEL "MIKE" ZECK (b. 1949, Greenville, Pennsylvania) graduated from the Ringling School of Art and got his start at Charlton, cutting his teeth on their horror titles. After a stint assisting Wallace Wood, he drew lots of high-profile comics, including *Superman* and *Batman* for DC, *Captain America, Secret Wars,* the *Punisher,* and *Spider-Man* (especially *Spider-Man: Kraven's Last Hunt*) for Marvel. In 1997, he drew the *Damned* miniseries from Image Comics.

Over the last decade, he has worked exclusively in the licensing and merchandising arena for DC Comics, Mattel, Fisher Price, and others. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

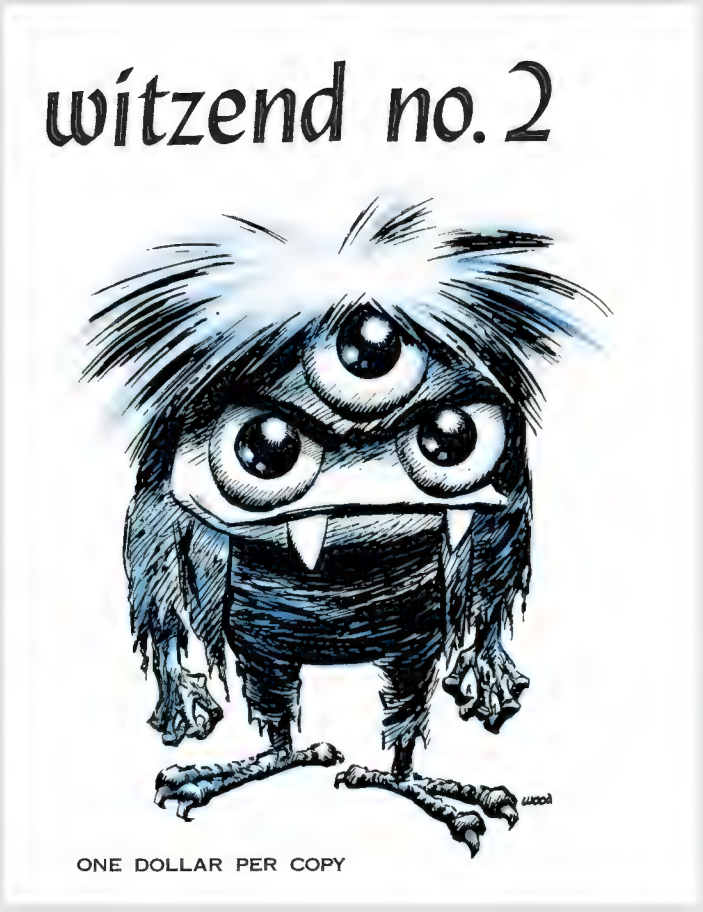
COVER GALLERY



witzend #1, 1966. Cover design by Dan Adkins, production by Archie Goodwin.



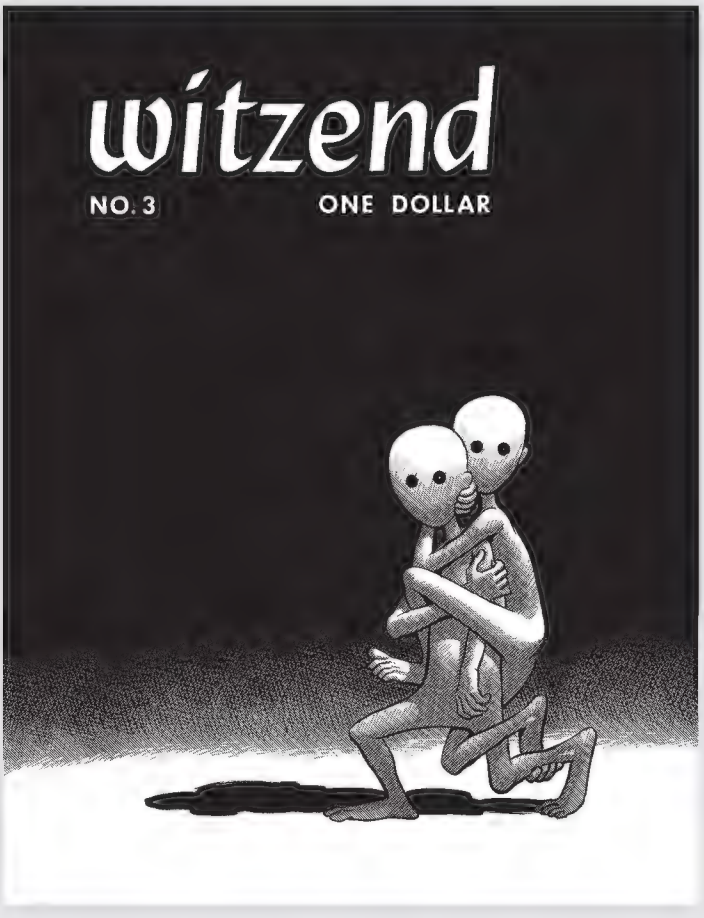
Back cover: Buster Crabbe by Frank Frazetta.



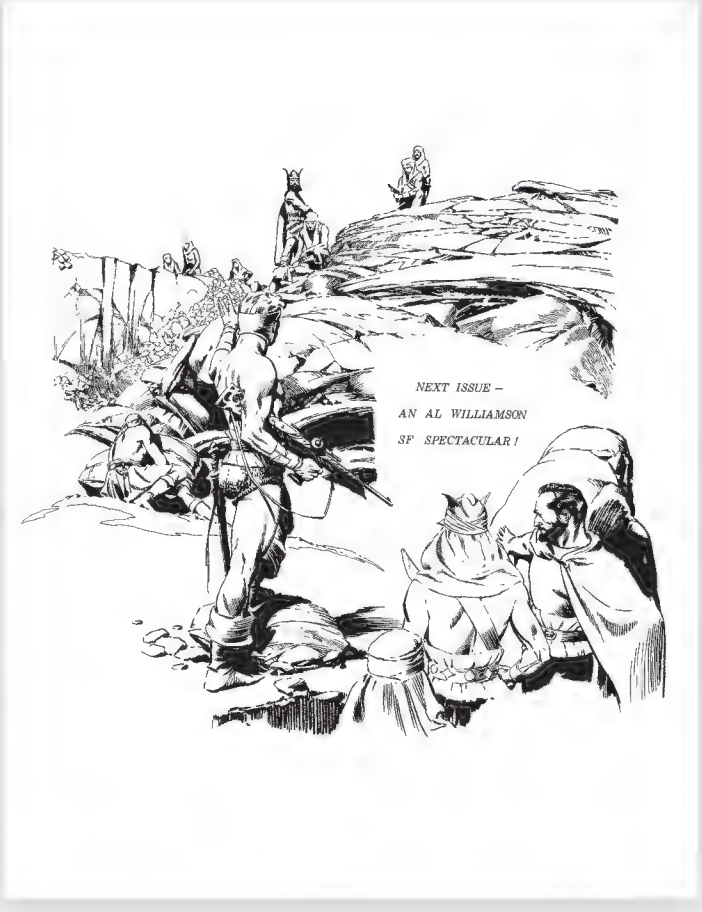
witzend #2, 1967. Cover by Wallace Wood.



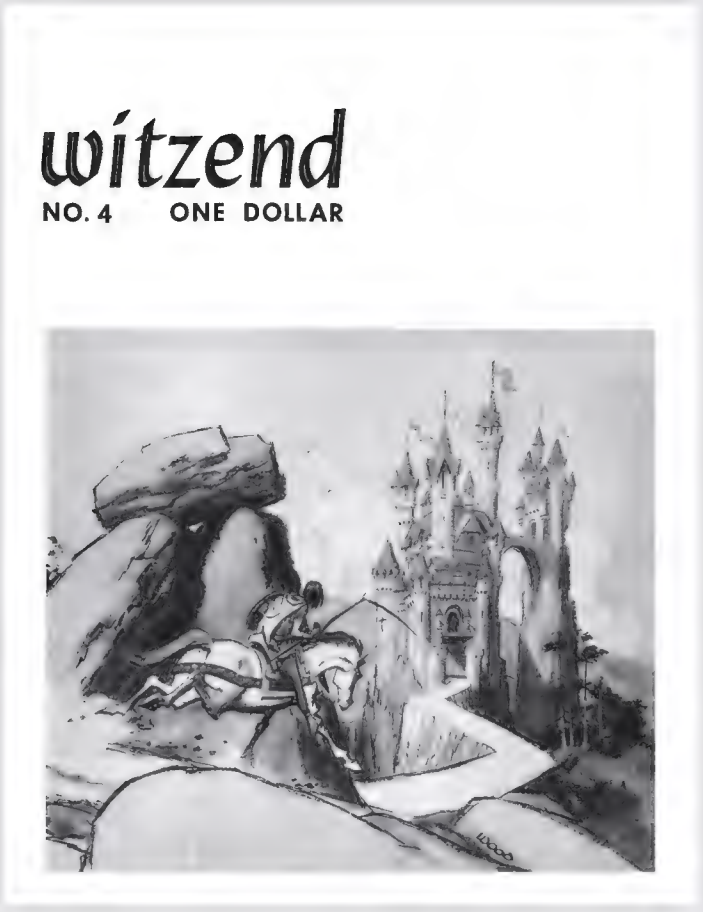
Back cover by Ralph Reese.



witzend #3, 1967. Cover by Wallace Wood.



Back cover by Al Willilamson.



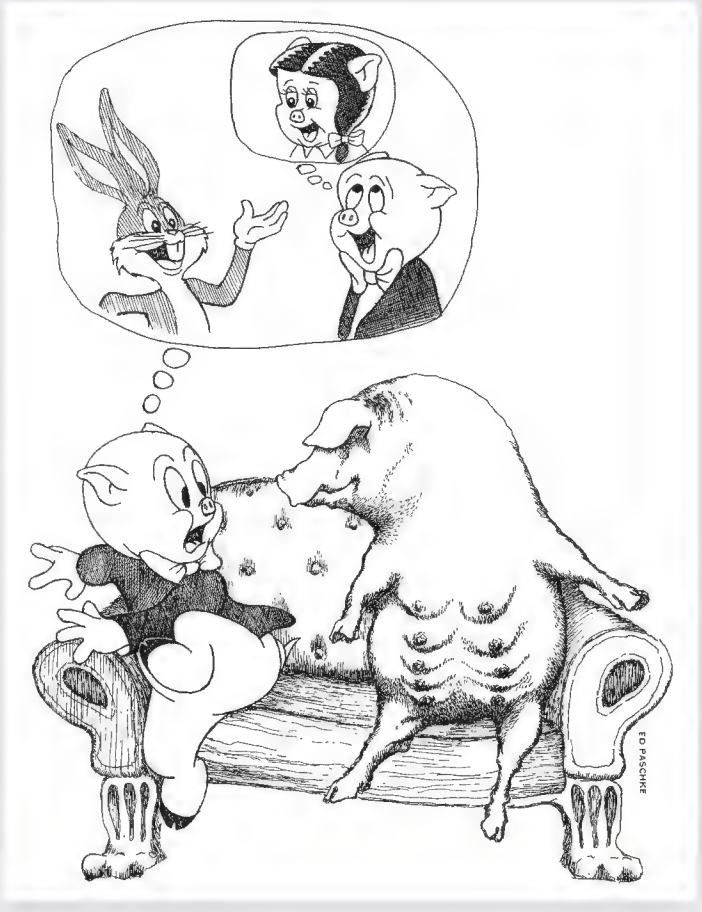
witzend #4, 1968. Cover by Wallace Wood.



Back cover by Frank Frazetta.



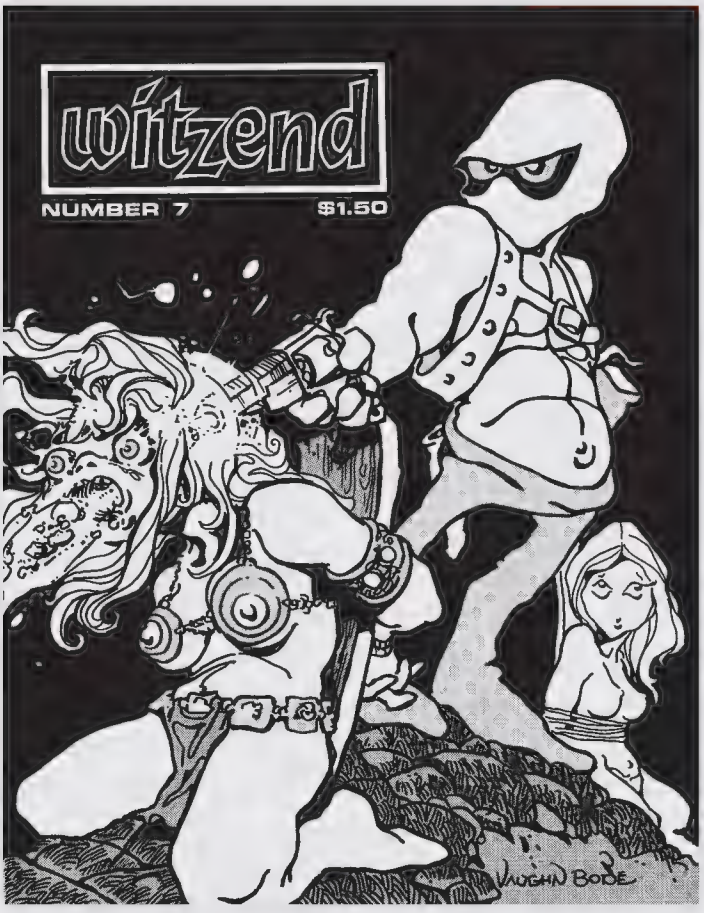
witzend #5, October 1968. Cover photo by Henry Roth.



Back cover by Ed Paschke.



witzend #6, Spring 1969. Wraparound cover by Mike Hinge.



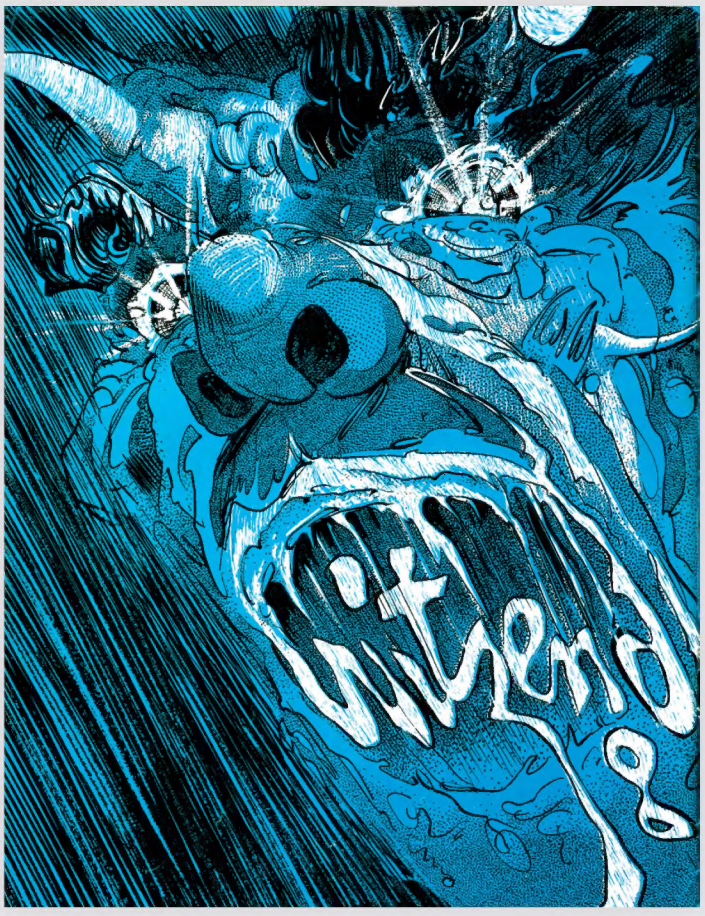
witzend #7, Spring 1970. Cover by Vaughn Bodē.



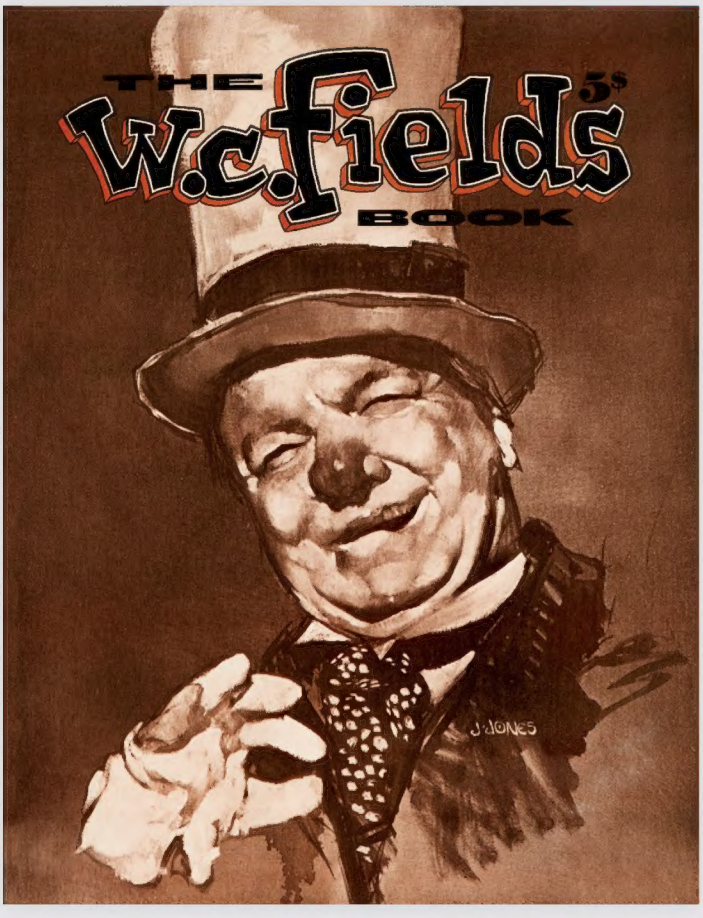
Back cover by Kenneth Smith.



witzend #8, Summer 1971. Cover by Ralph Reese.



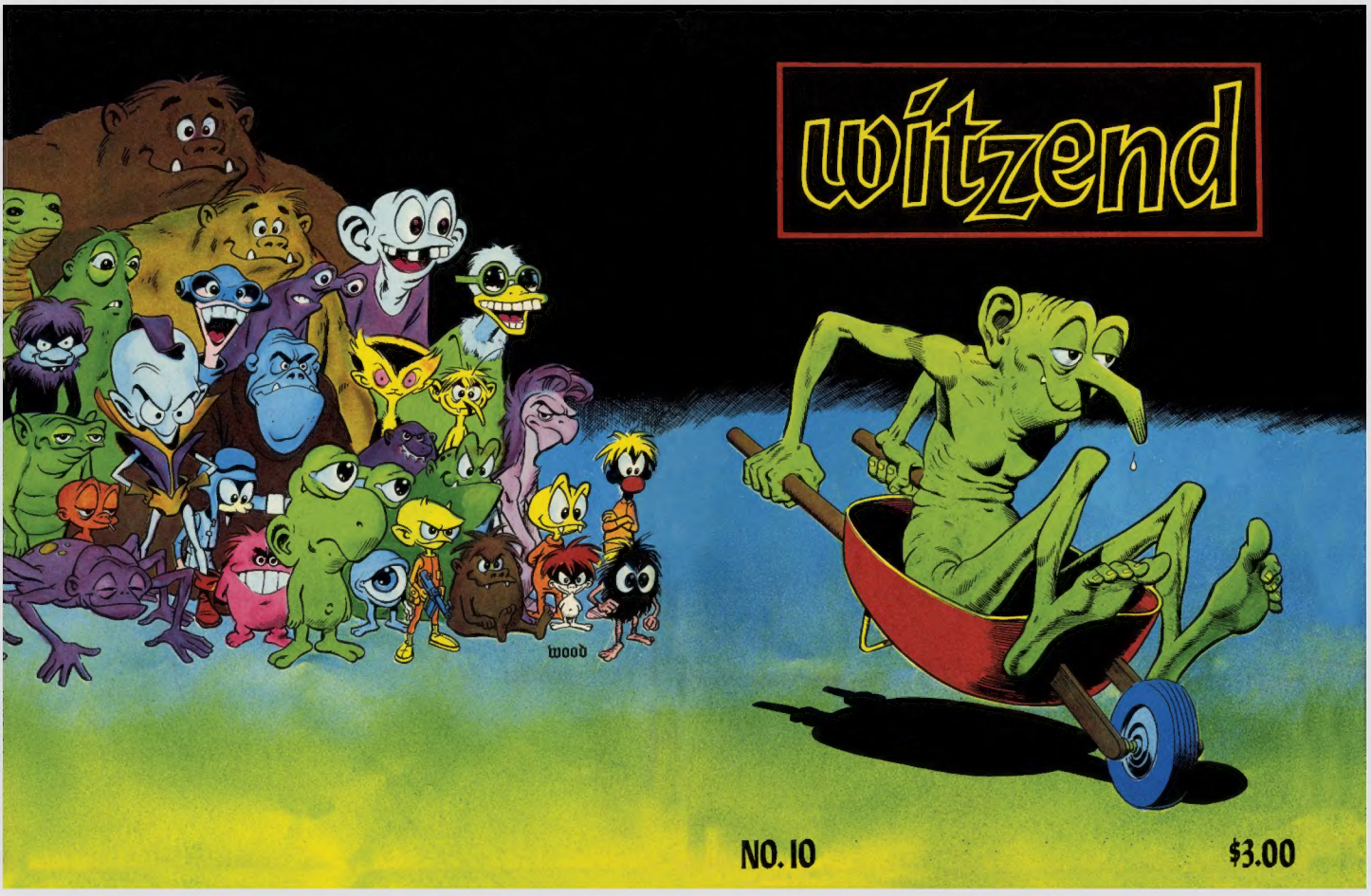
Back cover by Bill Pearson.



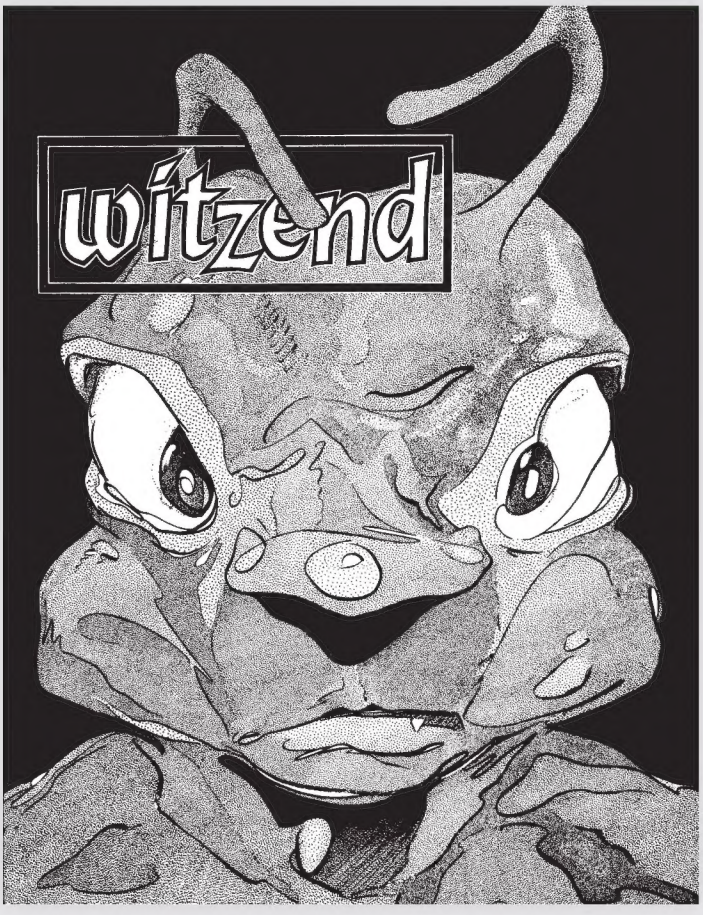
witzend #9, 1973. Cover by Jeffrey Catherine Jones.



Back cover by Bill Pearson.



witzend #10, 1976. Wraparound cover by Wallace Wood.



witzend #11, 1978. Cover by Bill Pearson.



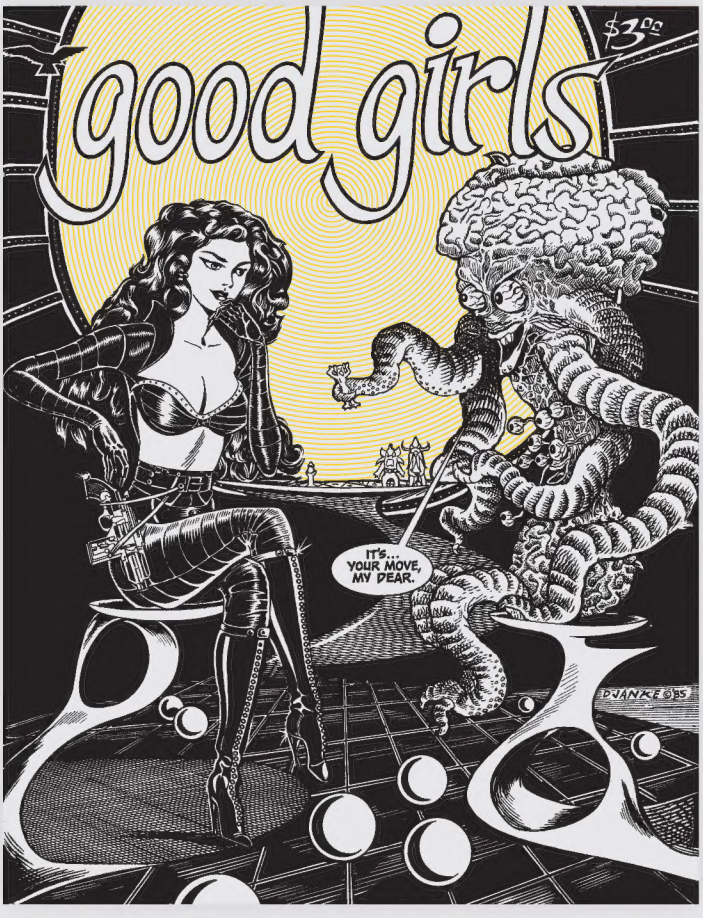
Back cover by Bill Pearson.



witzend #12, 1982. Cover by George A. Bush.



Back cover photo of Kym by Bill Pearson.



witzend #13, 1985. Cover by Dennis Janke.



Back cover by Bob McLeod.

CARTOONISTS UNITE!

Fed up with the formulaic restrictions, censorious nature, and onerous denial of creator's rights in mainstream comics, cartoonist Wallace Wood boldly decided to launch his own magazine.

Witzend immediately became a cauldron of creativity for Wood and his friends. And with friends like Frank Frazetta, Al Williamson, Gray Morrow, Steve Ditko, Reed Crandall, Art Spiegelman, Vaughn Bodē, Jim Steranko, Jeffrey Catherine Jones, Alex Toth, Joe Staton, Mike Zeck, Howard Chaykin, and Bernie Wrightson — to name just a few — it was a joyous outpouring of unfettered artistic freedom.

The Best of witzend includes the first appearances of Wood's feral avenger, *Animan;* Wood's fairy tale with teeth, *Pipsqueak Papers;* Ditko's controversial *Mr. A;* Morrow's swashbuckling *Orion* — and an Edgar Allan Poe poem stunningly illuminated by Frank Frazetta.

Curated by Bill Pearson, Wood's handpicked successor, *Best of witzend* also includes intimate details of *witzend*'s turbulent history and testimony to the inspiration it gave to other artists.

"a time capsule ... for both the United States and the comic book medium, showing how the seeds of change planted by the counterculture movement took root in art." — The A.V. Club

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS